

MR STRIBLING has chosen an almost perfect frame for his new novel in bringing a typical Southerner to a great Northern university where every current of our modern mechanized, intellectualized life is stepped up to its highest pitch. In its satire, its paradox, its caustic view of an utterly irrational mode of life it will be compared with Shaw's early plays and Huxley's *Point Counter Point*. As good reading, as a story, it will stand with his trilogy of the South: *The Forge*, *The Store*, and *Unfinished Cathedral*.

Andrew S. Barnett, a former member of the Georgia state legislature, fathered a law requiring a college degree for all county school superintendents. Defeated at the next election, he ran for school superintendent of his native Atlee County and won. Having no degree himself, embarrassed by his own law, he innocently came to the summer session of Megapolis University.

We follow the vastly amusing and humorous adventures of this naïvely shrewd Southern politician of the old school, in the maelstrom of ideas and events, moral upheaval and social change that centers in Megapolis. Through the fresh reaction of a mature mind which had accepted as deathless all the standards and mores of Southern civilization, we see in bold relief the texture of our Northern ferment.

He had adventures with the professor who used his classes to help him in turning out best sellers. He met Dr Fyke's medium, a French girl of casual morals, and became infatuated with her.

Then there was the aimless affair with the teacher from Iowa who lisped, his unexpected elevation to a chair of practical politics, his unwitting entanglement with several student demonstrations and, finally, his national notoriety for his entirely casual comment on the farewell speech of a professor who had been called to Washington for service with the New Deal.

It is all hilarious fun and satirizes our present currents of thought in a story of action and movement as only Stribling can do it.

Books by
T. S. STRIBLING

THESE BARS OF FLESH
THE SOUND WAGON
UNFINISHED CATHEDRAL
THE STORE
THE FORGE
BACKWATER
CLUES OF THE CARIBBEES
STRANGE MOON
BIRTHRIGHT
BRIGHT METAL
CRUISE OF THE DRY DOCK
TEEFTALLOW
FOMBOMBO
RED SAND

T. S. STRIBLING

These Bars Of Flesh



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FIRST EDITION

No CHARACTER in this book is based upon any living individual, and the university wherein the story is laid is a composite of many institutions. It is not, nor should it be considered, a picture of any single university.

THESE BARS OF FLESH

AMID THE REGISTRATION RUSH for the summer term at the University of Megapolis, a large plump gentleman made his way across the campus among a swarm of women and girls. The plump gentleman, outwardly, was looking for a man to direct him to the School Administration Building, but inwardly he was revolving the dubious and delicate errand which had brought him to the university. Then, as a background to these preoccupations, he sensed, rather than observed, every woman and girl who passed him by. That one, he noted in this obscure mental fashion, had pretty eyes. The next one must be a widow. Another swung along with a mannish stride and was followed by a flexuous creature whose hips swayed a trifle with every step she took. On and on they came, in an endless line, each one making unconsciously an impression which the plump gentleman unconsciously registered, like breezes blowing across a pool.

Now the large plump gentleman could have stopped any of these women and inquired the way to the School Administration Building, but he was checked by inhibitions which naturally lay outside of his immediate field of thought. To halt an unknown woman and inquire directions of her required a flick of effrontery, a shadow of rudeness, which he felt was not quite the tactful and delicate thing to do—besides that, he was too old. After forty-five there

is little to be gained, outside of simple directions, by inquiring one's way from a woman.

Then, too, there was another ground for his reticence. The large gentleman already had discovered, in his brief experience in Megapolis, that he could not hold anyone long enough to obtain understandable instructions how to do anything or go anywhere. Persons would pause in jittery politeness, whip out a sentence or two in a clipped Northern accent and then dash off down the street long before he understood what they had said. No, a woman wouldn't do. He wanted a man whom he could pin down and to whom he could repeat his questions over and over until he obtained the necessary information.

In this search Fortune presently smiled on the plump gentleman, for he saw ahead of him two men seated on a marble bench inside of a great circle of cannas. He entered the scarlet-and-yellow ring with a feeling of relief, but he did not plunge directly at his objective as possibly a Northern man might have done. Instead he slowed his step and stood looking around and about him with a sight-seer's air of geniality. Inwardly he was pondering which man to address. He decided against the well-fleshed gentleman on the north end of the bench because he smoked a fragrant cigar and his face wore the easy, complacent skepticism which is the hallmark of a prosperous, brief-spoken American businessman. The smaller man on the south end of the bench seemed more approachable and would probably prove the more talkative. This man had a slight face under a prominent forehead, and his expression changed from time to time with his changing thought. Presently he wriggled a little and twisted around to see what roughness was at his back. It was a dedicatory inscription cut in the white upcurve of the marble: "**ENGINEERS * 1919.**"

The large plump gentleman caught at this shift in the small man's stream of thought and commented affably on the smokiness of the day.

The little man looked up, then glanced at the prosperous man on the other end of the bench to see if by chance he was the one addressed. Clearly he was not. For a moment the small man seemed about to let the plump gentleman's observation go as self-communion directed to nobody. Then, out of some inner necessity to clear up an incorrect statement of fact, the little man ventured to say that the day was about as clear as days came in Megapolis.

The large plump gentleman made that sound of slight surprise and amiable agreement with which any well-mannered stranger in a city expresses his belief in anything a native chooses to tell him. He waited a moment longer, then pointed out a tower on the misty horizon and asked if that were one of the famous skyscrapers of the metropolis. The small man hesitated a moment before he said in a reserved tone that it was not the famous skyscraper. The large man asked what building it was. The small man said he didn't know.

"Mm-mm—it's a wonderful city, anyway," generalized the large man. "I understand you fellows who live up here all the time really never do look at the sights at all—you just think you are going to look at 'em sometime, but you never do."

The small man nodded agreement to this current report.

"Well, I'm going to try to see something while I'm here. You know, I almost wish I could take some of you Megapolitans around with me and show you your own town." The large man gave a friendly chuckle, then added, "That is, if I have time."

Another silence, but the wish had been so friendly, even if completely impractical, that it persuaded an answer:

"That's the trouble with all of us—time."

"Mm-mm, isn't that the truth—the hustle and bustle of this city! As for me, I'm going to save out a little time—if I can," he pondered. "Really I don't know whether I can or not. I came up to arrange a—ah—a little detail

here at the university—and if my schedule isn't too full——” He came to a questioning pause on this point.

“Not many do it,” the little man finally said.

“No—no-o, I suppose not, but now my case is different. I don’t expect to have so much *work* to do—it’s more getting everything arranged right.” As this evidently was becoming more and more misty, the large gentleman made an effort to clarify himself: “Tell you the truth, I’ve just been elected as county school superintendent down in Georgia—Barnett’s my name—Andrew Barnett—and I came up here to arrange—well, to arrange a little detail here at the university.”

After two or three moments the small man seemed to realize that this was a kind of introduction, and such an overture retarded quite definitely the faint touch of friendliness which was growing up between the two. For a space he seemed minded to make no reply at all, but presently did vouchsafe in a distinctly reserved tone:

“My name’s Derekson.”

“Mm-mm—Derekson—Derekson.” Mr Barnett tilted the syllables as if he were tasting them. “I knew a man by the name of Derekson in north Alabama—lived up close to Huntsville—run a big dairy——”

He was interrupted here, however, by the well-fed gentleman on the northern end of the bench, who tossed away an appreciable value of the unsmoked cigar in his fingers.

“You are not Gun Derekson!” he ejaculated, in the possessive tone of an executive.

“Yes, that’s my name,” said the small man, still more surprised and wary.

“I’m Medway—Philip Medway—your advisee back in——” He nodded at the date of the inscription on the back of the seat.

The small man and the prosperous man arose and automatically extended their hands. The little thin-faced man asked in amazement what the prosperous man was doing

there at this time of the year. It appeared that the prosperous man's son, Fargason Medway, had been required to make up some work, and that Fargason was the sort of boy who required summer courses and considerable parental pressure to accomplish this end.

"I didn't know you had a boy old enough to go to college."

"Got a boy and a girl, too. And you—I suppose you're here to enter a—— But no. I am sure your boy would have passed his exams with flying——"

"No, I have no family at all," corrected the small man at once.

The large ruddy-faced Mr Barnett was amazed at this meeting.

"Do you fellows mean to say that you knew each other and that you've been sitting here like this and never found it out?"

The prosperous Mr Medway nodded at Mr Barnett with a flattered feeling of Northern virtue.

"I believe that is what we did."

Mr Barnett began laughing at such an inexplicable social attitude. In the thawing situation little Mr Derekson introduced the two.

"Medway," repeated Mr Barnett reflectively. "Do you happen to be related to Claymore Medway who breeds trotters down in Atlee County, Georgia?"

"I'm afraid I don't know Mr Claymore Medway. . . . Gun, what are you doing here, you're not going in for postgraduate——"

The small man seemed somewhat embarrassed.

"No-o—it isn't that."

"Well, I knew you were a wizard in mathematics, but I didn't suppose——"

Little Mr Derekson gave a brief laugh.

"I—I'm what you might call a—a social dividend, Phil."

"Social dividend?"

"Yes, you might call it that." He laughed again. "I was working with the Monitor Insurance Company—actuary, you know—and there is a new calculating machine that has just been put on the market—it can calculate probabilities to the seventh decimal by pulling a lever three times. It let out a whole bunch of the actuarial force."

"That why you call yourself a social dividend?" inquired Mr Barnett curiously.

"Ye-es," dragged out Mr Derekson. "A man has invented a machine that relieves me of the pick-and-shovel work; it sets me free to investigate some advanced problem, say in electricity or magnetology."

"I see—mathematical research," summed up Mr Medway.

"Yes, that was my idea," nodded Mr Derekson.

"Well, come on, let's go around to the Administration Building," suggested Mr Medway helpfully. "I know everybody around there. . . ."

As the two started off, Mr Barnett fell in with them and with a very natural air placed his case before Mr Medway on the same plane as that occupied by Mr Derekson.

"Now listen," said Mr Barnett. "The reason I came here was to arrange about getting a diploma, or a degree, or—something like that."

Mr Medway looked around at this odd statement.

"Isn't that more or less the motive behind this whole summer crowd?"

"Well—yes—in a way—but I have a sort of an odd case, Mr Medway. I was in the Georgia legislature three year ago, and I introduced a bill that every county school superintendent in Georgia had to have a degree. It carried and——"

"Phil," interposed Derekson, "you don't have to go around with me. I appreciate your interest, but——"

"Glad to do it for you—very glad, Gun."

"Well, two years later," went on Mr Barnett, "I got beat for the legislature and made a race for school superintendent in my county, which I won hands down——"

The two men stopped him again:

"But I know how busy you are—and this is putting you out, Phil——"

"Listen," interrupted Mr Medway, "I owe you this personally, not for what you did for me but for what I have done to you."

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"The machine that put you out of business was called the Multiplex, wasn't it?"

"I'm not sure—I believe it was, but I don't see why——"

"That was it. It is the only machine on the market which will do what you describe. Well, I happen to be consulting engineer for the Multiplex Company, so you see I turned you out of your job, and it's up to me to help you get another."

Mr Barnett was astounded:

"Imagine—things working around like this!"

Mr Medway began a mathematical defense of the coincidence:

"I'm consulting engineer for a number of companies, and there are not many actuaries in the United States."

A pause came here, and Mr Barnett took advantage of it to return to his own problem:

"As I was saying, I won the superintendency hands down, but you see I had already made this law that county school superintendents had to have college degrees. But I haven't got any, so I need one in the worst kind of way. You might say I'm swinging at the end of my own halter." Here Mr Barnett broke into genial laughter at his own predicament. Then he inquired, as one friend to another, "Now what am I going to do about this business of getting a degree?"

His two companions began smiling at the rather droll

recital and apparently were about to set their thoughts to his problem when they were interrupted by the din of fifes and drums. A moment later they saw a procession of students marching across the piazza in front of the old library.

In the parade the boys wore red paper caps and the girls red ribbons on their shoulders. They carried banners which bore the legends:

"WE WANT OLLENBERG." "WE DEMAND INSTRUCTORS
OF COURAGE AND CONVICTION." "WE CALL A STUDENT
STRIKE FOR THE REINSTATEMENT OF OLLENBERG."

Although the procession was very youthful and rattling, still it possessed that authoritarian quality which denied to all pedestrians the right to pass through its line of march. So the three gentlemen stood waiting, and presently Mr Barnett asked who was Ollenberg.

"An economics professor who was dismissed ostensibly for his Red leanings," explained Mr Medway briefly.

"You say 'ostensibly'?" inquired Mr Barnett, with tactful ellipsis.

"Well—yes," went on Mr Medway still more obscurely. "About once every so often the board dismisses some tutor or minor professor whose work is not satisfactory, on account of his radical tendencies—it's an assistance."

"Assistance to what?"

"It encourages endowments from men who are in a position to endow——" Here Mr Medway suddenly broke off and called out:

"Fargason! Fargason Medway, what are you doing in that line? Come here!"

A tall boy, considerably taller than Mr Medway himself, stepped out of line and came back, taking off his red cap, rather foolishly.

"Dad, I didn't know you would be out here. I thought you were seeing the dean."

"Listen," directed Mr Medway sharply, "I wish you

would keep out of this sort of thing. I wish you could realize that politics is not morals or patriotism or religion, it is simply politics, it is a decision on what course to pursue under a given set of circumstances. I wish you could realize that while you are young, Fargason!"

"Yes, sir."

"Uh-huh. 'Yes, sir,' you say—and then march around, beating a drum."

"It's just a discussion club, Dad, and the others voted to—er—march around and beat a drum."

The young man was looking wistfully after the company which had marched on without him, but the circumstances in which he found himself required that he remain where he was.

"Well, what shall we do tonight, Dad?" suggested the boy, with diplomatic geniality. "Go to a show——"

"Listen," cut in Mr Medway. "Your adviser, of course, is not here during the summer term, he's gone on."

"Yes, yes he has," corroborated young Fargason warmly. "Harry is a chap who never flunks or——"

"Yes, I see we both admire that quality very much in other men," agreed Mr Medway tartly. "What I was getting at is this: Harry is gone now. And, Fargason, I would like you to know the attitude of some other part of our country besides the East. I would like you to gain an inkling of some of the more conservative sections of our country. I think it would do you good."

"Why, yes, Dad," agreed the tall thin boy, a little at sea at such an opinion.

The executive turned to his new acquaintance with a characteristically swift decision:

"Now I don't know what Mr Barnett will think about making a friend out of a boy who would go marching around over the grounds wearing a red cap, but I think it would be a great help to the boy." Here Mr Medway shifted his point of address with the adroitness of a council-table speaker. "But, Mr Barnett, he is really not as red as his

cap, and if you would just hear his troubles, which are numerous, and show him the conservative attitude toward life which is characteristic of the South, I not only would appreciate it personally, but I believe it would be an actual service to society at large. How do you feel about it, Fargason?"

"I? Oh, I would appreciate it very much indeed," returned Fargason dutifully, glancing Mr Barnett, politely enough, up and down.

Mr Barnett himself, sensing that the prosperous gentleman might very well have influence that would be of future service to him, was very amiable to the young marcher in the Red line.

"Very well, that is arranged," concluded Mr Medway, with Northern promptness.

They had been walking as they talked and had reached a building where a queue of applicants extended out of the front door along a concrete walk for some thirty or forty yards. This queue stood silent, motionless, inexpressive. It was a string of summer students, mostly women, a few men here and there, all pushing hard onto middle age. Nearly all of them carried briefcases, so that a kind of dado of black bags ran down the line.

Mr Medway's little sermon to his son and his appointment of a summer adviser to take the place of a vanished winter adviser had completely cleared the surface of his mood.

"Now where is it you yourself wanted to go, Mr Barnett?" he inquired, with that brisk Northern geniality that always carries with it a bracing autumnal feeling, as if winter were not far behind.

Mr Barnett said to the School Administration Building.

"That's fine, we have come to the very place—this is still the School Administration Building, isn't it, Fargason? It used to be when I——"

"I don't know anything about the Department of Edu-

cation," said Fargason, with the restrained pride that an undergraduate of some other department takes in that fact.

"Well, I am sure it is still the School Administration Building. So good-by, Mr Barnett, and I only hope that I can be of some assistance to you in the future. Come on, Derekson, you come with me and Fargason to the dean's office."

Mr Derekson began self-effacingly:

"I hate for you to go out of your way, Phil. Good-by, Mr Barnett."

"Good-by, Mr Barnett," called the boy. "I suppose I'll be looking you up one of these days."

And the two gentlemen and the young man departed.

STUDENTS WERE COMING from all directions toward the queue that was waiting in front of the Administration Building. When Mr Barnett entered the line he found himself sandwiched between a tall, powerfully built youth and a trim young woman of about thirty years of age. The Southerner glanced genially from the one to the other, but neither of them took any note of him. The woman was examining the contents of her briefcase with a troubled face. The youth gazed completely through Mr Barnett, through the woman, through the building in front of them into some distant region, located, no doubt, in his own fancy.

Only then did Mr Barnett become aware of the silence of the line. Nobody talked. Once in a while someone coming out of the building nodded at a person in the file. At some distance behind the Georgian two girls consulted in low tones about the number of points they would be able to squeeze in during the summer term. Near the door two fattish boys with curly black hair discussed in raised voices the important positions waiting for them when they finished their courses in business.

But none of this was talk as the art was defined and practised in the state of Georgia. And for a line of persons to keep such public silence as this, except at funerals and prayer, seemed unnatural to the superintendent-elect from Atlee County.

He glanced at the tall youth behind him and then at the trim young woman in front of him with an automatic appreciation of the latter's latent comforts to the masculine heart. He wondered what the woman was looking for in her prolonged inspection of her briefcase. Without any actual plan in his head he made a flank move toward conversation with the oldish girl by asking the tall young man behind him what time it was. The youth twisted into Mr Barnett's view a large hairy forearm with a foreign-looking watch on it and said nothing.

"I—I wonder if that's right?" queried the Georgian, continuing his unilateral conversation, and he glanced at the watch on the woman's wrist as if he would compare the two.

The girl did not observe this at all, and the tall youth shrugged slightly and returned his arm to its natural position.

There is always something funny about Northern idiosyncrasies to a Southerner. Mr Barnett maintained a face quite as serious as any in the line, but he became curious to see how far these folk varied from what he esteemed to be the human norm. So he said, as he would have said to any man in an analogous position, say, in Atlanta:

"I suppose you will be going to school here for the summer term?"

The large young man continued looking at Mr Barnett for several seconds, evidently trying to connect this last remark with the hour of the day. Finally he seemed to accept it as an irrational quantity and replied in a slightly foreign voice:

"That is why I stand in line."

"Yes—certainly," agreed Mr Barnett, getting down to this bedrock of fact. "It's why I'm in line, too. I'll be here for the summer and maybe for the fall term. I take over the office of superintendent of schools down in Georgia the

first of the year, and I may have to stay here until then to get what I want."

The large young man did not go into his own aims and ambitions but nodded vaguely and let it go at that.

Mr Barnett cleared his throat and observed in round generalization:

"You know, it's a shame, a big powerful chap like you having to link down and study books."

The large, animallike young man puckered thick-skinned brows, trying to understand this.

"Why is it a shame?"

Mr Barnett shrugged.

"I suppose it isn't, really. Just a saying we have in the South. When we see a big husky fellow like you, we say it's a shame for him to have to sit in a house and study books, and—really—it is, in a sort of way, don't you think so?"

The large young man rescued their talk from this humanistic involution by saying simply:

"I play football."

"Oh, football!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, with some subconscious design of interesting the oldish girl in front of him. "I see, that explains—" Then he paused and looked, uncertainly, first at the young man and then at the girl. "But they don't play football during a summer term?"

"No, they do not," agreed the large youth.

Mr Barnett considered clearing up this slight contradiction, but he really was not interested either in the young man or his football. So he veered off, with a touch of pride, into something about himself, which he hoped might gain a wider audience than merely this young man:

"Do you know, as often as the high-school team has played in Attleburg I've never been to a game of football in all my life?"

"No, I didn't know that," said the football player.

"No, sir, never have—haven't got a thing in the world against football—some people say it's a brutal game—maybe it is, I don't know. As long as I never see one, I won't know. And since I've been elected county school superintendent, it just struck me as being good policy not to know. You see, I'd hate to stop the boys if I thought it was a brutal game. On the other hand I couldn't in good conscience let it go on if I thought it was a brutal game—being in a position of authority makes a man careful."

"Yes, yes," agreed the large youth, with the first evidence of interest in the conversation since it had begun.

"Well, that's the way I feel about it, right or wrong. . . . My name's Barnett"—he held out his hand—"Andrew Barnett. As I say, I'll be up here all summer and maybe during the fall."

After a second or two the football player bethought himself and took Mr Barnett's hand in a large powerful grip.

"Chekolokovsky," he said.

Now during this entire hit-and-miss conversation a good third of Mr Barnett's attention had been given to the woman. She seemed not to have heard a word that he and Chekolokovsky had said. He wondered if she had lost something out of her briefcase. And was she so worried about it that she actually could not hear two men talking in her ear?

This idea disturbed Mr Barnett. He was always genuinely uncomfortable if there were a woman in his vicinity who needed anything or wanted anything which he could get for her. So now, as he talked to the football player, he glanced up and down the walk and along the border of grass to see if she had dropped anything. Sure enough, he saw an envelope fallen edge down in the narrow strip of unmowed grass by the side of the walk. He stooped for it and offered it with a slight flourish natural to him.

"This isn't what you happen to be looking for, is it, madam?"

The woman continued at her briefcase a moment longer, then seemed to hear what he had said, for she looked up.

"You weren't thpeaking to me?" she asked dubiously.

"Well, yes, I was," apologized Mr Barnett, with actual sincerity. "You seemed to have lost something out of your briefcase. I saw this letter down there by the walk——"

"No—no, I haven't loht anything." She hesitated a moment, then added, with a touch of bitterness: "That ith, nothing I ever had."

"Well, that's bad," said Mr Barnett, a little taken aback. "I—uh—in a case like that—I—I don't suppose anybody could help you."

"No, they couldn't help me," agreed the woman, giving Mr Barnett a glance to see what he was like.

The superintendent-elect from Georgia was not only curious, he was really distressed for the girl:

"You weren't really, then, hoping to find whatever it was you—you haven't got, in your briefcase?"

The woman glanced at him again and vouchsafed the faintest curl of her lips in appreciation of the absurdity.

"No, I wath counting my credith. I have credith enough already to graduate, but I jutht can't get through on thpeech."

Mr Barnett frowned in bewilderment and actual sympathy.

"How is that, miss?"

The woman reddened a trifle.

"I have to take my work over in the Thcool of Thpeech," she explained stoically.

"School of Speech!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, who had never heard of such a discipline. "You don't mean to say they refuse to graduate you because——"

The woman seemed touched by a faint hope.

"Didn't—don't—don't you notith that I lithp?"

"Well, no-o—I really hadn't. Anyway, what difference

does that make? Surely you don't have to take any work over because you have a little lisp?"

"Mm-mm—a lithp ith not little in Megapolith, it ith a very large thing, Mithter . . ."

"Barnett—Barnett," supplied the Georgian, with a Southern bow.

The woman was not unfavorably impressed. She herself was a Miss Letah Lester. Mr Barnett inquired at once if she were any relation to a Mr Jim Court Lester of Blowing Rock, Georgia. He had met Jim Court Lester, he explained, in the Georgia legislature, and this led into the story of how he had fathered an educational bill in this legislature requiring county superintendents to have college degrees, and how, as luck would have it, he later became the superintendent of Atlee County and now here he was, up North to get a degree and obey his own law. He laughed very heartily at his own plight.

Miss Letah Lester out of her experience with a Northern university was not greatly amused. She asked him soberly enough what subject he would major in.

"School administration," said Mr Barnett.

Miss Lester became concerned:

"Ith that why you came to thith building?"

"Yes, I wanted to enroll in a course in school administration."

"You are in the wrong plath. You don't come here to enroll in thcool administration." As the young woman talked, her lisp became less noticeable. "This is the School Administration Building. It—it's where they do it. It isn't where they teach it. You would never learn anything about school administration here. They teach it in thome other building."

Mr Barnett looked about the bare room into which his section of the line finally had crept.

"A man told me this was the place to enroll in the school-administration classes."

"He was probably a professor," surmised Miss Lester,

drawing a large gray book with a paper back from her case. "There is no use asking a professor about anything except something he teaches himthelf."

"Then where do I go to—"

"I'll find it for you." She ran her finger down the index, repeating softly to herself, "School administration—school administration—Professor Cleman—Thykology Building, Room 401, Wednesday evenings at eight—two points." Miss Lester looked up from her catalogue. "Only two points. How many points do you need, Mr Barnett?"

"Well—I don't know."

"Don't know! Haven't you got your points? They'll knock off a plenty, you can be sure of that! How many points have you got?"

"Don't know that either. I—— When I went to school, they didn't give points."

"My heaventh, if you haven't got plenty of points don't take school administration!"

"Why not?"

"You only get two points for it."

"Yes, but if it's what I need——"

"Oh, that's nothing. Very few people can take what they need. They have to take courses that bring in the pointh. You'll never get anywhere trying to take what you need or what you can use. . . . Now lemme see—here is Dr Fyke who also gives a course in thcool administration. That would be a snap course, but—no—no, that wouldn't do at all."

"Why not?"

"Because you get no points at all for Fyke's courses—they're just cultural courses. You don't want to throw away your time taking cultural courses."

She was running on down the page when Mr Barnett began moving away.

"I believe I'll step over to the Psychology Building and see——"

"Wait! Wait! Don't throw away your place in this

line! You've thpent two hours getting here. In a little while we'll be at the desk."

"Well, what sort of a course does this lead into? How many points does it give?" inquired the Southerner.

"This doesn't lead to any course at all. It's the line-up for the Housing Bureau, where you rent a room. Have you rented a room yet?"

"No, I haven't. I just came up from the station."

"Then hold your place. At the desk the girl will give you some addresses. You had better rent your room right away if you don't want to pay subway fare. All the rooms in walking distance will be snapped up soon, I can tell you."

"Well—all right. I believe I'll do that. Which is a good neighborhood to rent a room?"

"I'm going to try for a Riverview Avenue room. I think this early I can get an Avenue room with breakfast privilegeth. Sometimes you can get an Avenue room with both kitchen and laundry privilegeth."

"Those privileges wouldn't interest me."

"Then you haven't a wife with you?"

"No."

"Then by all means get an Avenue room. You can get a very pleasant room for ten or fifteen dollars a week."

"Mm-mm—I understood from the catalogue that one could get a pleasant room from six to eight dollars a week."

"Oh, those rooms—in the catalogue. No new student ever saw those rooms. I looked for some five years ago when I first came here; they were all gone then."

Mr Chekolokovsky, standing immediately behind the two, had ceased taking that neighborly interest in the conversation of two persons whom he almost knew. The football player may or may not have been aware that he had been made a stepping stone by Mr Barnett to an acquaintance with Miss Lester. Mr Barnett himself did not realize it.

3

WHEN MR BARNETT REACHED Room 401 in the Psychology Building he found that Dr Cleman had sailed for Europe on the preceding Monday, and in his stead sat a somewhat youngish man who tipped up his chin and looked down at him with a somewhat aloof expression. A card on the dingy desk bore the name:

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR MINTON B. STAHL
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

Mr Barnett sat down in a chair which had been placed with reference to a window so the light fell on his face at a revealing angle. He told who he was and what he wanted.

Young Assistant Professor Stahl frowned, batted his eyes once or twice and had Mr Barnett repeat everything which he had said, then inquired in a voice that still doubted if he had heard aright:

“You say that you have been elected superintendent of schools in Atlee County and that you—need a degree?”

Mr Barnett had supposed there would be some discussion on this point, and he had prepared himself.

“I made the law myself, Professor Stahl—that’s the point.”

“But just what connection exists between the authorship of a law in Georgia and the conferring of a degree in—”

"Well, now, I take it that this university in general and the Department of Education in particular are interested in the welfare of education."

"That first premise is undoubtedly correct, but how it can bear on the proposition that—?"

"But you see we are just starting to have college graduates for superintendents in Atlee County," pointed out Mr Barnett earnestly. "I'm already elected to the office. And I have very progressive ideas about education—very. I want to strive for a finer and finer school personnel—"

"You think it would help you somehow if Megapolis University would give you a degree for six weeks' work in school administration?"

Mr Barnett picked up a card on Professor Stahl's desk and turned it nervously in his fingers.

"Not me. It isn't for myself I'm asking this. I can hold my job, degree or no degree. It's for the system. I was in earnest when I made that law. Now I want to set a precedent that will absolutely keep unqualified men out of the office of county superintendent. I don't want any future superintendents to be able to point at me and say, 'There was a superintendent who had no college degree, and he was as progressive as any of them!' No, I don't want 'em to do that. I'm on the side of progress. I want, if possible, to carry out the provisions of my own law to the letter."

"I take it you hadn't thought of—" Assistant Professor Stahl placed the tips of his fingers gently together—"of resigning your position?" he inquired delicately.

"No—no-o—wouldn't be any use in that. There's nobody in Atlee County who's got a degree except two lawyers and three doctors. And they wouldn't have the job. You see, the South's not like the North. I understand up here you-all have LL.D.s and Ph. D.s picking up the paper on your streets. As yet the South doesn't enjoy any such blessings of education. We haven't got enough degreed men to go around for the intellectual jobs, much less street

cleaning. As I say, if you will do this for me it will set a precedent that will bear its fruit in the future." Mr Barnett turned his card over and looked on the other side, which was a blank.

"Well, Mr Barnett, I think you will concede that your request is—is unusual?"

"Mm—prob'ly it is."

"And that there is what you might call a university side to our discussion?"

The ebullient Mr Barnett pulled at his chin and did his face into a thoughtful, defensive frown.

"Well, I would have supposed that first and foremost the university wanted to forward the cause of education."

"Yes, but Atlee County must be a fairly small territory, and the graduates of this institution are supposed to have undergone a certain fixed discipline. I am sure President Winneman himself would say that we try to keep up a certain continuity of output in our graduates. With theories of education fluctuating as they are, we don't even say our graduates are good, but we do say they are standardized. They are just like Ford automobiles. You wouldn't expect the Ford factory now and then to run in a Mercedes roadster, would you?"

"Mm," grunted Mr Barnett more sympathetically, "I see—I see. No—no, I wouldn't."

"So, in order to keep up the quality of our output—or down, if you like—the university requires at least a year's residence——"

"Uh—listen. Even if I can't get a degree, couldn't you fellows give me some sort of document to show that I have been up here for the summer course—and I'll run on into the fall term if necessary—some sort of document—a receipt for my tuition—a certificate of attendance—a voucher that I had enrolled? It wouldn't take much to satisfy the legal requirements of Atlee County. And it would prevent—you know—it would prevent any un-

qualified impostor from palming himself off on the people in the future."

Young Assistant Professor Stahl continued to shake his head.

"I am afraid the minimum time for receiving any certificate whatever from the university is one year's residence, and that comes after you have received the B.A."

Mr Barnett looked out of the fourth-story window, reflecting what could be done under the circumstances.

"Listen, couldn't you go ahead and advise me what to do just as if I were going to get some sort of credential? I want to do something in school administration. I could tell the people back home what-all I had done—and besides, it might come in handy when I start in with the Atlee County schools the first of the year."

"Certainly, certainly, at your age you can enter the school-administration classes, but you understand there will be no credits attached to such attendance."

"I believe that will work out," speculated Mr Barnett, running this program through his imagination. "What I really learn ought to help me in my office, and my friends will take my word for the legal end of my job." He arose a little dubiously, looking at the card in his hand, then said, "Stahl—Stahl—you don't happen to be kin to any of the Stahls down in Eldorado County, do you, Professor?"

"Not that I know of. And by the way, Mr Barnett, that card you have taken——"

The Georgian was somewhat embarrassed.

"I beg your pardon, I didn't mean to walk off with——"

"No, it's not that. They were placed here for public distribution, but I don't believe I would follow up that card if I were you. I don't believe it would do you any good—that is, pedagogically, I mean."

Mr Barnett began to read the card.

"There's no objection to my taking one?"

"No, no, you can take one or a dozen. I am simply telling you, as your adviser, that with your present outlook

the request on the card would be of no benefit to you."

With a visible movement of his lips, Mr Barnett read:

You are requested to report to Dr Myron Fyke's laboratory, 612 Psychology Hall, to take a mental-association test to be used for scientific purposes. Athletes and students over thirty are especially requested to report.

The Georgian looked at his adviser a little blankly.

"Scientific purposes?" he queried aloud.

"That's what the card says," returned the assistant professor in an even but disapproving tone.

"What sort of scientific purposes?"

"Some based on a commercial foundation, I daresay," returned Stahl with a touch of superciliousness.

"Why do they want athletes and persons over thirty?"

"You know as well as I do what Fyke is doing now."

"I'm afraid I don't—I never heard of him before."

Assistant Professor Stahl frowned incredulously.

"Never heard of Dr Myron Fyke?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Allow me to congratulate you, Mr Barnett, on your mental integrity. My suggestion is that you preserve it."

"What—what does he do?" inquired the Southerner curiously.

"He writes books for public consumption," explained Professor Stahl, with distaste. "His last book—let me see—I think he called it *Eros, or the Relation between Sex and Architecture*—that's the sort of thing he does. I understood it sold fifty thousand copies before it was off the press."

Mr Barnett opened his eyes.

"That's a lot of books."

"Yes, it is," conceded Assistant Professor Stahl dryly.

"Uh—what did he say was the relation between—uh—sex and architecture?"

The assistant professor made a slight annoyed movement of his fingers.

"I didn't read it. I have never read any of his books. He produces a new one about every four weeks. I understand that he keeps three or four written ahead all the time."

A sudden recollection of what Miss Lester had read to him out of the university catalogue popped into Mr Barnett's head.

"By the way," he ejaculated, "does Dr Fyke give a course in school administration?"

Professor Stahl made a hopeless gesture.

"I suppose he does—or has. He popularizes practically every subject in the curriculum at one time or other."

Mr Barnett looked at the card again.

"Room 612—that's in this building, on the sixth floor, isn't it?"

"It is," bowed Assistant Professor Stahl coldly.

WHEN MR ANDREW BARNETT walked out of Professor Stahl's office he was not only curious about the enigmatic card he held in his hand, but his head was full of the canny wisdom of a politician in regard to Assistant Professor Stahl and Dr Fyke. Fyke was an author and would reflect on his pupils some of an author's publicity. Now if he, Andrew Barnett, studied school management under an author who wrote books on school management, that would greatly impress the people back in Atlee County. It would in fact be almost the equivalent of a college degree. He believed he could pull through and hold his office with nothing more than that to back him.

As for what the two men, Stahl and Fyke, actually taught, Mr Barnett did not believe that either one had anything of consequence to impart. The county school system down in Atlee gave the children the three Rs, and that was all they needed. Anything further than that which teachers absorbed in the Department of Education merely decorated the teachers. That was why Professor Stahl was so bitter against Dr Fyke; the Fykian decorations possessed the higher degree of visibility.

He had known this quite well when he introduced his bill into the Georgia legislature, making it obligatory upon a county superintendent to possess a college degree. But the idea seemed stylish, and he had thought he could

get back to the legislature on his progressiveness. And he would have done so had he not unhappily voted for a "no-fence" law which came up during that term of the legislature. This law was very popular in the urban counties, and it was a law in which he thoroughly believed. Several Atlee Countians had been killed by stock running loose on the concrete motor roads, to say nothing of the deaths of at least a dozen tourists coming through from the North. But he had voted conscientiously once too often. The farmers wanted to use the open range for their cattle, and the next time he ran for office he was defeated.

As Mr Barnett reviewed this incident in his political career, he pressed the button preparatory to ascending to Dr Fyke's office. There his study in school management would gain a wider publicity than anything he could hope for in Professor Stahl's classes. And also, up there he would read the slight riddle posed by the enigmatic card in his hand.

After he had pushed the buzzer two or three times he saw above his head the sign, "THIS ELEVATOR NOT RUNNING." As he read it he pressed the buzzer again in the human hope that the notice was mistaken, or that service had been resumed and the operator had failed to take down his placard.

He was in just a little bit of a hurry. He had an engagement to meet Miss Lester at the Sydney on One Hundred and Twenty-second Street, and now he glanced at his watch to see the time. His engagement to meet Miss Lester had come about quite naturally. In the line at the Housing Bureau they had come to know each other fairly well, and since Miss Lester was acquainted with the neighborhood and had to find a place for herself, they had planned to hunt rooms together.

Now, as he stood looking at his watch, calculating the time until this engagement, a hoarse voice at the other end of the hallway croaked:

"This elevator, sir."

Mr Barnett hurried over toward a smaller cage which was quite full of passengers. The operator was a small dour man with a large frowsy head who inquired hoarsely for floors.

Nobody answered him. A voice in the jam asked peevishly:

"Why isn't the regular elevator running?"

"Elevator strike downtown," replied another briefly.

"What's that got to do with this?" demanded the first voice.

"Fourth floor! Wasn't that the fourth floor!" ejaculated a woman, coming out of a book. "I wanted off at the fourth floor!"

"I'm no mind reader, lady," snapped the operator, continuing upward.

"Six," cried Mr Barnett.

On the sixth floor Mr Barnett was expedited out of the elevator by several others behind him who also wanted to get out, and he stood looking around for Room 612 when a voice at his elbow observed:

"So you're hunting Dr Fyke's office with the rest of us, Mr Barnett?"

"Uh—yes—how are you, Mr Medway?" The Georgian was surprised to meet Mr Medway again. Already he felt that to find an acquaintance in the maze of the university, unless it were a fellow classmate, was something unusual.

"No matter what you want you can get it from Fyke," smiled the engineer, "and no matter who you are, Fyke will get what he wants from you."

Little Mr Derekson, who moved apologetically by Mr Medway's side, said he could not see how Dr Fyke could possibly use a mathematician.

"Nor I, nor I," agreed Mr Medway, "but somehow or other you will prove quite profitable to Fyke."

Here Mr Barnett remembered the card he had picked up in Professor Stahl's office and showed it.

"What is this mental-association test that Dr Fyke is asking people to take? What's it about?"

"I can tell you very easily," answered Medway. "Publicity."

"Yes, but why does he particularly want athletes?"

Mr Medway shrugged slightly.

"I would say that he is writing a book that will appeal to athletes and that he is using the names to make a mailing list to send to his publishers—I understand he does that sort of thing."

At this point the three gentlemen entered Room 612. The reception room was filled with a waiting line which stood around three walls and was seated along the fourth. Along this fourth wall the applicants sat at narrow desks, and all were writing very earnestly. They would write a word, then look up at the ceiling, bite their pens or pull their chins, according to their sex, and presently write down another word.

A girl who was very tall, and certainly very impersonal and efficient, sat at the information desk giving out sheets of paper. A card on the corner of her desk displayed the name, "Miss Moe."

As the three men approached she offered them sheets of paper and asked if they would take the mental-association tests.

Mr Barnett was somewhat disconcerted to enter the study of a writer and find it looking like an employment agency. On second thought he decided that would be the sort of place a practical, hard-working Northern author would prefer. He had read about such men choosing offices in downtown skyscrapers. He took the paper that Miss Moe offered him.

Mr Medway, however, waved the sheet aside, told the girl who he was and said that he and Derekson would just step into Dr Fyke's private office and see him for a moment on personal business. With that the two disappeared through an inner door.

This parting with his companions gave Mr Barnett a somewhat flattened feeling of unimportance. However, he read with considerable curiosity the sheet that Miss Moe gave him.

It was not very enlightening. It contained a list of unrelated words, each word followed by a blank space. At the top of the sheet, instructions said:

Read each key word as receptively as possible, then write in the blank line the first associated idea that comes into your mind. If it be a person, place or thing, an impulse, a memory, an impression, a half-memory which you cannot completely recall, write it down as clearly as you can. Do not attempt to explain anything. Explanations are not desired. Print your answers and your name.

That was what the persons at the desks were doing as they stared at the ceiling, chewed their pens, scratched their jaws; they were reading each key word as receptively as possible.

As Mr Barnett awaited his turn, a large youth already at a desk asked in an undertone:

“Miss Moe, what are these questions for?”

“For scientific purposes,” returned the tall girl, in the low, reassuring voice that nurses use to patients who are dangerously ill.

“There are a great number of scientific purposes,” observed the large young man.

The girl at the desk looked at him.

“You’re a football player, aren’t you?” she inquired carefully.

“Yes, I am—that’s another question: why does Dr Fyke particularly want athletes?”

“I am unable to answer that. You might inquire of Mr Eldo—he is one of Dr Fyke’s secretaries—that’s his door to the left.”

“If you don’t mind, I will,” grunted the player, and he arose and entered the door indicated.

Mr Barnett recognized the young man, Chekolokovsky, who had stood just behind him in the queue before the Housing Bureau. The Georgian started for the desk the football player had vacated, but just as he was sitting down at it a girl from somewhere slipped in under him, and immediately behind her were a man and two more women who had tried to slip in under her. Mr Barnett stepped back and begged their pardon. The girl who had shot in under him paid no attention to his apologies but began at once chewing her pen and looking at the ceiling.

Mr Barnett returned to his place against the opposite wall, thinking that if the girl had only made some sound she might have known that he would have given her the desk. That was one of the differences between Northern and Southern women: the Northern woman accepted your seat just as you were getting into it; the Southern woman, from a distance. The Northern method was the more intimate, even if Northerners were, on the whole, a cold, stand-offish folk.

As these reflections passed through Mr Barnett's head, the door of the secretary's private office opened again and the football player backed out of it, followed by a well-set-up, dynamic-looking man.

The athlete was saying:

"No, no, not for me, Dr Fyke. Others may go into it if they want—"

"But, my dear boy, what earthly objection can you have to answering a few simple—?"

"Well, I—I don't want to spoil my luck."

"Luck—luck!" laughed Dr Fyke. "My dear Chekolovsky, you are positing a causal connection between some unknown event in the future and a completely unrelated filling-out of a list of words in the present; what possible connection could there be between the—?"

The big fellow held up a hand.

"I don't know. I'm just playing it safe by not filling it out."

"But listen," pressed the Doctor. "You would like to do your part, would you not, in freeing the world of superstitions?"

"What superstitions?"

"Well—beliefs that these association tests are designed to destroy?"

"Mm-mm—ye-es—sure, but I don't want to break my own luck doing it."

"Break your luck! Why, old man, I've filled out one of these blanks myself. If there were any harm in——"

"Mm-mm—but you made the list out yourself. Isn't likely a man's own——"

Here the big fellow broke off, and Dr Fyke observed that Mr Chekolokovsky was looking at a girl who had just entered his suite from the outer hall. The Doctor motioned to the newcomer.

"Miss Redeau, let me introduce Mr Chekolokovsky—you know, the left guard on the university's team."

"*Oui, oui,* I have seen Meester Chekolokovsky," nodded the girl, pronouncing her words with a foreign twirl. "I have seen Meester Chekolokovsky play. He ees verrie wonderful."

"He is helping us here by filling out one of our mental-association tests."

"That ees a verrie good theeng, Meester Chekolokovsky. Dr Fyke weel find out sometheeng wonderful sometime, yes?"

"Miss Redeau is my assistant in abnormal psychology," explained Dr Fyke genially.

"I theenk eet ees verrie fine, such large strong boys like you to help Dr Fyke. We moost all work together, moost we not, Dr Fyke?"

"Just what I was telling Mr Chekolokovsky," nodded the psychologist.

"And eet ees verrie seemple," continued Miss Redeau, moving to one of the desks and saying in an aside, "Would you mind, just a moment?" and the person in it got up and

went away. She placed a dimpled hand on the football player's expanse of biceps and pressed him into the seat. "Now you just read these words, then you theenk, and whatever you theenk, you write down." She picked up the fountain pen that was chained to the desk, leaned against him and went through the motion of writing. "And be sure and preent it," she added.

Mr Chekolokovsky took the chained pen and looked into the girl's face, which was not very high above his own.

"Now that first word—what does eet make you theenk of?" she smiled, with her lips not far from his.

"I—don't know," hesitated the football player.

"I weel go away, then you weel know," and with a smile and a faint, intimate nodding she turned and disappeared through an inner door.

Mr Barnett was also looking intently at the door through which Miss Redeau had gone when his name was called and he saw Dr Fyke standing beside him.

"Mr Medway told me you were out here and described you," explained Dr Fyke. "He tells me that you have agreed to advise his son, Fargason. Great boy, Fargason—ver-ee-ee-ee idealistic."

"Yes, that was my impression," nodded Mr Barnett gravely, who, in this moment of meeting a real Megapolis author, recalled no impression whatever of Fargason Medway.

"Now you, yourself," went on Dr Fyke, "—I understand you are having some difficulty in orienting yourself here in the university."

Here Mr Barnett told Dr Fyke about the educational law he had fathered in the Georgia legislature and how he himself had become enmeshed in its toils. He concluded by saying that he had come up to Megapolis in good faith, hoping to mend his academic insufficiencies, but that he was not able to take any work at all in the university because he did not have enough credits to allow him to make a start.

Dr Fyke immediately offered Mr Barnett work in his department.

"But does work in your department lead to a degree?" pressed the Georgian.

"It might lead to an honorary degree—in time. But at least my work fits the student for a concrete job in life itself."

"If I had a regular job at some sort of real work, I can see that your courses would be fine," conceded Mr Barnett, "but I'm hooked up with education itself. That has nothing to do with getting things done, it has to do with degrees. I realized that when I put my law through the Georgia legislature. I thought I would make our whole educational system hold together, don't you see? Since it was a matter of getting degrees, I thought it was nothing but right that the man at the head of it should have one, too. I made a big speech about it in the capitol at Augusta. I said, 'Why should the man at the head of the system be allowed to escape scot free? Why should he get off when he compels everybody else to get a degree?' And the House was with me to a man."

"Vindictive," observed Dr Fyke.

"Mm-mm—fair play," modified Mr Barnett.

"The two words are synonyms," said Dr Fyke, "the subjective and objective expressions for the same thing."

There was a moment's silence, then Mr Barnett went on:

"Now taking into consideration what I need, I had hoped you fellows would be able to give me a certificate, or a voucher, or a receipt—just anything to show the people of Atlee County that I've been here. Now, for example, a testimonial from you that I had done good work here—I believe I could make that do. It's a moral issue with me. I want to obey the law so as to allow no loophole for any less conscientious candidate who might follow me."

"Listen," said Dr Fyke, "I'll take this matter up with Dr Winneman, our president. He is a very liberal man,

although of course he does cling to a number of rather discarded theories. However, that is always the function of one wing of a university: to cling to the theories that the other wing discards. It is an embodiment of our general human desire to run with the hare and follow with the hounds."

"You think President Winneman will do something?"
"I hope so."

"Well, how about me going over now and taking the matter up with him? I haven't very long to stay here——"

"No, no, I'll take care of that. President Winneman has a strict academic mind—that is to say, he never understands what you mean, but he is always insistent that you understand what he means. No, I will arrange for you to meet the president under propitious surroundings." Dr Fyke turned to the girl at the desk. "Oh, Miss Moe, take this title, please: *Seizing Attention, or How to Win Fortune through Personal Approach*. Let that memo come up on my desk six months from today."

The girl wrote this down and filed it away.

"Then how am I to see President Winneman?" persisted Mr Barnett, who was sufficiently academic to insist on details in default of any general plan.

"Let me see—Miss Moe, would you read over some of our faculty meetings—where a considerable number of us get together?"

The information girl drew out a list and began reading:

"'Psychological Department—English Faculty—Engineers—Electricians—Dinner at the Hotel Royal George for Dr Nisson——'"

"There, there, that's your opportunity, Mr Barnett—dinner at the Royal George for Dr Nisson. I'll arrange for you to sit fairly close to President Winneman. I'll sit next to you, and we will explain your need. We can show him how unusual it is for a college degree to be of any actual value to a man, and what a pity it would be for a

man who can actually use one not to get it. He's quite a liberal man. I think we can arrange it."

By this time Mr Barnett himself felt a breath of optimism in the situation.

"This work I am going to do with you, Dr Fyke—will it run along the line of school management?"

"Well, no, no, I couldn't give you any work in school management. That isn't a popular subject. Nobody would read a book on school management except persons who were interested in managing schools, and such persons wouldn't buy books anyway, they would draw them out of the free libraries."

"But I am interested in school management. I came up here to the university especially to study school——"

"Yes, of course, but you'll have to do as other people do, Mr Barnett. You'll have to take your college degree or certificate or voucher in whatever you can get. Then, when you walk out into the world, you will have a brain trained to attack the most abstract and unrelated problems. You can center it on the thing that really does interest you and learn it in a little or no time. . . . Now, Miss Moe, will you give Mr Barnett a ticket to the banquet at the Royal George—the price, I believe, is two dollars and fifty cents. I'll meet you there, Mr Barnett. Until then, good-by."

Mr Barnett bowed after the Doctor, paid for his ticket which he received from the information girl and walked out into the hall.

The Georgian was just a little bewildered at all that had happened. He put his ticket carefully away in a fold of his pocketbook. When he looked up he saw the tall form of Chekolokovsky standing across from the door. Mr Barnett went over to him.

"I heard you talking in there a while ago—why did you hesitate to fill out Dr Fyke's mental-association test?"

The football player looked down on Mr Barnett.

"Did you notice what it said?"

"It said 'Print your answers.' "

"No, no, it said they particularly wanted middle-aged students and athletes."

"Well, what of that?"

"That's what I asked that young Mr Eldo, and he said it was because that sort was likely to die first."

Mr Barnett straightened and stared at the big fellow.

"Likely to what!"

"Die first—die first," repeated Chekolokovsky, with horror in his eyes. "I didn't propose to be risking my neck writing the answers to any such questions as those."

"But you did?"

"Mm-mm—ye-es, I did. Say, do you happen to know at what hour Miss Redeau gets out of his offices?"

"No, I don't," said Mr Barnett, turning and looking at the door.

The football player hesitated a moment and then volunteered the information:

"He puts her to sleep and finds out things from her—she's his medium."

Mr Barnett looked at him.

"A medium—— No, you must be wrong. A university wouldn't have anything to do with a medium."

5

MR BARNETT WALKED to the small elevator on the sixth floor of the Psychology Building, touched with a mental grue at what Chekolokovsky had just told him. Dr Fyke was card-indexing the mental associations of persons most likely to die or be killed, athletes and the middle-aged, and he had in his employ a medium!

Such a set-up gave the Georgian a very queer feeling indeed. What was Fyke's objective? No doubt, the scientist was going to write a book on some subject, but what manner of theme would require death—and a medium? Mr Barnett could not imagine any reputable scientist dabbling in the gross superstitions of the illiterate. It must be something else Dr Fyke was after . . . hiring a medium . . . Miss Redeau . . .

Here Mr Barnett stopped thinking of Miss Redeau's mediumistic function and continued on his way to the elevator, simply remembering the girl herself. She had a very pretty accent. It seemed odd to think there should be a way of speaking English—an incorrect way, he supposed—that was really prettier than English itself. Then, when he considered such an insensitive hulk of a man as Chekolokovsky waiting in the corridor for so charming and quaint a girl as Miss Redeau, it annoyed him. He possessed the middle-aged married man's delicacy of feeling on such matters. When he saw an attractive girl wasting her time

and affections on some inappropriate person, it was as if he himself, through the transposition of sympathy, were being jilted. Or, to look at it another way, it was as if all highly personable young ladies were engaged to marry him until they found handsome, worthy mates of whom he could approve.

On the small iron grille at the end of the hallway the surly elevator man had hung up another placard, "THIS ELEVATOR NOT RUNNING." The Georgian looked at this in a leisurely way, then turned and strolled back to the larger cage in the center of the hall. Here again he found posted a second sign of similar content.

Mr Barnett had neither the disposition nor the legs for six flights of stairs. He looked at his watch to see how much more time he had before his engagement with Miss Lester. Then he pressed the electric button to see if someone might not bring the elevator up in an informal way. As he stood thus, with the patience which physical inertia gives, a string of men and women carrying briefcases came down the stairway on the left of the cage, filed past Mr Barnett and descended the steps on the right. The last man who passed caught Mr Barnett's eye and nodded at the sign on the elevator door and would have passed on in silence, but the Georgian fell in beside him.

"What's it stopped for?"

"Mm-mm—sympathy, or mayhem," suggested the young man judicially.

"Sympathy or mayhem?" questioned Mr Barnett.

"Yes. Either our man has quit in sympathy with the strikers, or they have come here and beaten him up—the elevator operators are on a strike, you know."

"Yes, I'd heard that."

"Spread in all the papers," observed the young man, moving his briefcase in a neighborly way to the hand opposite Mr Barnett.

"I haven't read the papers yet. I've just got into town. My name's Barnett. I'm from Georgia."

Mr Barnett's companion nodded agreement, with just a hint in his face of some inner lightening of his mood. He continued down the stairs in silence but presently opened his briefcase, reached in and scribbled something inside of it.

"Just a note that I failed to put down in class," he explained politely.

"What class?" inquired Mr Barnett.

"Journalism."

"Have your journalism classes in Psychology Hall?"

"No, speculative philosophy, but it's a part of the course."

"Mm-mm." Mr Barnett walked for a space in silence, then his own riddle returned to him. "What do you know about Dr Fyke's classes?"

"Workshop method."

"Yes, I know that, but he was wanting to get the mental associations of a fellow by the name of Chekolokovsky——"

"Football star."

"So I understood. What I'm getting at is this: Chekolokovsky told me that Fyke told him that Fyke was going to use the answers he got to these mental-association tests—after the people were dead!"

The faint touch of the ghoulish in Mr Barnett's voice affected the journalism student not at all. Instead, he replied in a matter-of-fact way:

"That is not quite correct. It is much more accurate to say he is *not* going to use the answers after the people are dead. I've gone into that."

"*Not* going to use them!" stressed Mr Barnett, more mystified than ever.

"That's Fyke's idea—*not*."

"Huh—well, that is odd!" Mr Barnett reflected a moment, then hit off at another angle: "Look here, Chekolokovsky thought it would bring bad luck for a person to

make out a list of questions which were to be used after he is dead. But now if they are *not* going to be used after he is dead—what do you think about that?"

The journalism student moistened his lips but remained quite sober.

"You can't put it completely on that basis—they *may* be used. That's the point—that possibility of use. If Fyke were sure they could never be used, there would be no motive in collecting them."

"No-o—I suppose not," dragged out Mr Barnett dubiously.

"Now as to the influence making out the list would have on luck," proceeded the journalism student gravely, "we would have to look at the problem both from the possibility that the questions would be used and that they would not be used, in order to explore the whole field."

"Yes—ye-es, I suppose we would," agreed Mr Barnett. "What do *you* think about that?"

"There you have me," admitted the journalism student frankly, as he opened his briefcase and made another note. "I'm not from the South. I believe that section of our country goes in more deeply for such abstruse speculations than the North."

"How could you tell I was from the South?" inquired Mr Barnett, quite flattered at this recognition, as all Southerners are in the North.

"Oh, I knew by your accent—and—your affability. And besides, you just told me you were from Georgia."

"Oh yes, so I did." Mr Barnett was rather taken aback.

"So what do you think about luck?" went on the journalist, "—as a Southern man who has given the matter some study?"

"Now I'm not a scholar," prefaced Mr Barnett modestly, "and I have never gone into the matter in a scientific way, but I really believe that any man's plain, common horse sense is the best guide in most things, don't you?"

"Certainly, certainly. That's why I'm here at the uni-

versity. Now using the common-sense approach, to start with, is there such a thing as luck?"

"Why, of course," cried Mr Barnett, rather shocked. "I know there is such a thing as luck. I know lucky men and I know unlucky men. But whether making out a list of questions to be used after you are dead—whether that would bring you bad luck or not—that's a question. I am inclined to think it would."

"Why?"

"Well, for the same reason that taking out a life-insurance policy brings you bad luck—the two are very close together."

"You think taking out life insurance brings you bad luck?"

"Oh yes, sure. I've known a lot of people to take out life-insurance policies and die right off. You see, it gets them to studying about dying, and the first thing they know, they die."

"So you think this other would work like that?"

"Well, it's likely to. The only difference would be that you wouldn't have to pay any premium on Dr Fyke's list every year, you wouldn't think of it so often, and you probably wouldn't die so quick."

The journalism student frowned very hard at this, drew in his lips and bit them in concentration on the point. He made another note in his briefcase.

"It's reasonable," he conceded. "Where are you going now, Mr Barnett—what's your address?"

"Right now I'm on my way to find a room. I haven't any address. Why do you ask?"

"Well, I'd like to interview you. I'm interested in Southern philosophy. And then too I'm interested in the superstitions of the Negroes. I understand the Negroes in the South are very superstitious—you possibly may know some of their superstitions?"

"Oh yes, they are very superstitious," said Mr Barnett, beginning to smile. "What they believe really would

amuse you. I would be very glad for you to come around and have a talk."

"I'll certainly come," said the journalism student.

By this time they had reached the entrance of Psychology Hall, and the young man tipped his hat and went to his next class.

Mr Barnett was inwardly amused. He could see that the journalism student classed his belief about life insurance bringing on death down on a level with the ordinary superstitions of the Negroes. But that was all tommyrot. He knew an actual case. Old man Jimmy James, who lived in the south part of Atlee County, had got his life insured one Saturday evening for a thousand dollars, and the next Saturday evening he was dead.

If a Southern man had suggested by innuendo that Mr Barnett was superstitious after the manner of the Negroes, he would have been very offended and resentful, but for a Yankee to do the same thing—that meant nothing at all. It was only a Yankee.

WHEN MR BARNETT PARTED with the student of journalism he glanced at his watch and saw that already he was late for his appointment with Miss Lester. He stirred his steps momentarily, but presently began thinking again of Miss Redeau and her extraordinary duties in Dr Fyke's laboratory, and his pace relapsed automatically into the dignified progress of a Southern gentleman.

It was unbelievable about Miss Redeau—a medium employed by the university! Why, mediums, in Mr Barnett's mind, were quacks who preyed upon the credulity of the superstitious, and now to find a medium employed by a reputable professor in Megapolis University! He gave the brief laugh of a man free from such absurdities, glanced at his watch and quickened his pace once more.

Like most strangers in Megapolis, Mr Barnett did not know precisely where he was or whither he was going. He was hurrying along somewhere on One Hundred and Twenty-second Street between a double row of sixteen-story apartment houses when he saw a mulatto boy shoving a woman out of one of the ornate marble entrances. The woman tried to hold to the door jamb and cried out that it wasn't right to treat her in that manner.

The sight of a colored boy pushing a white woman out of a house struck the Georgian's nerves with a whip. He charged forward, yelling:

"What in the hell are you doing there, you damn——"
Here he came up with the two and swung his arm to sweep the Negro from the face of the street, but the slender youth squared off at him in an emancipated Northern fashion, dodged and poked in a blow of his own, so that Mr Barnett hit nothing at all but received a thump instead.

The comfortably plump Georgian was beside himself at the immeasurable impudence that the mulatto should defend himself. He made roundhouse sweeps at the youngster. He would eradicate him. The woman was screaming for the police, and almost at once an officer came running around the corner. He shouted at the yellow boy, who broke off at once, grabbed up a placard which lay on the sidewalk, hoisted it on his shoulder and began walking up and down in front of the entrance.

Mr Barnett was charging the youth again in the midst of this extraordinary conduct when the officer came dashing up, shouting:

"Here, let that picket alone! You can't stop peaceful picketing! Who are you, the owner of this house?"

He laid a hand very roughly on Mr Barnett's arm and whirled him around.

Mr Barnett could hardly speak.

"Do you allow a nigger—to attack a white woman——"

"Why, you were mauling this boy!" cried the officer.
"Come along with me!"

"Officer! Officer! The boy was putting me out of the houth—he wouldn't let me go in!" cried the woman.

"I was patrolling the entrance, and she ran against me!" snapped the mulatto, using a precise grammar and a clipped Northern pronunciation that in some way added still more fuel to Mr Barnett's wrath.

"Is that what you saw?" demanded the officer of Mr Barnett, "—this woman running into this picket?"

"I saw this yellow nigger bumping this white woman, putting her out of the building!" exploded Mr Barnett.

"Listen," snapped the policeman, "I'm no artist, I'm not trying to paint their pictures, and I don't care what colors they are. You are not allowed to start a fight in the street because you see a man and a woman bump together. They very often bump together here in Megapolis—it's not unusual."

"Mr Offither," interrupted the woman, "he is a Thouthern gentleman who hath jutht come up from Georgia, and —uh—that ith the way they do down there, you know that yourself."

This clarified the situation even in the policeman's mind. He turned to the mulatto.

"Did this man hurt you, boy?"

"No, he never did hit me at all, Mr Officer."

"You don't want to make a complaint against him?"

"No, he doesn't own the building, I haven't got time to make complaints against him. Wouldn't do anybody any good."

"All right, you can go ahead with your picketing, but be careful and don't bump into people when they are going into or coming out of a house."

The boy straightened his placard, which read:

**"THE SYDNEY USES NON-UNION ELEVATOR OPERATORS.
THE PUBLIC IS REQUESTED TO BOYCOTT THE SIDNEY"**

The woman fell in at Mr Barnett's side.

"Some on, leth look at another addreth," she said, in a voice warm with admiration.

For the first time Mr Barnett became aware that the object of his chivalry was Miss Lester, who had been awaiting him at the Sydney. Her lisp, as well as her appearance, informed him of her identity. The Georgian was extremely embarrassed when he made this discovery. In the South a white man is not supposed to be struck by a Negro without visiting condign punishment upon the rascal. And

now, since Mr Barnett saw no way to do this, he had fallen into disgrace with himself.

As the two moved on down One Hundred and Twenty-second Street, Miss Lester was lisping in a very grateful voice indeed:

"It wath thertainly very thweet and noble of you, Mr Barnett, to come help me like that."

The Southerner glanced at her to be sure this was not irony directed at the outcome of the battle. It seemed not to be. He drew a deep breath.

"Up here," he panted, "seems before—you can put a nigger—in his place—have to ask—permission of the—police."

"I didn't really much mind him not letting me into the Thydney. I don't think I would want a room in an elevator building anyway."

"That—that hasn't a thing—in the world—to do with it."

"No, of courth not. The labor organithers are to blame." As the girl talked on, her lisp became less and less obvious to Mr Barnett's ears, until finally he lost it almost completely. She was continuing: "The organizers get up strikes so the elevator men can see they are producing results. It's a graft—like everything else—but it certainly was thweet of you to come help me as you did. All right, here is our next addreth."

In One Hundred and Twenty-third Street they had stopped in front of a house with an old iron fence, a strip of grass about two feet wide and some stone steps that led up from the sidewalk to a massive stone stoop. Miss Lester pulled at the ancient bell and produced a distant clang within. She looked at Mr Barnett and said:

"Rather old-fashioned, isn't it?"

"I don't mind it. My wife likes this sort of thing. If she had this old doorbell she'd be crazy about it."

"So would we at home," agreed Miss Lester. "But here

in Megapolith people don't go in so much for old things."

"Wonder why?"

"Oh, nobody is born in Megapolis. We are all strangers here. The things that make old houses beautiful is mainly what you know and feel about them. If nobody feels anything, they are really not beautiful at all."

"You may be right at that," assented Mr Barnett, observing that Miss Lester herself, when she discussed what was beautiful, seemed very pretty, although her face was merely intelligent and sensitive.

At this point the door opened and a short, thick woman appeared. The most evident thing about her was that she dyed her own hair and had not been able to confine her dyes to any one color. She asked the usual questions: Did they want rooms? Where did they come from? Who sent them? Were they man and wife? When Miss Lester answered this last in the negative, the landlady blinked her pale, lashless eyes.

"Oh—not married?"

"No," explained Miss Lester. "Mr Barnett is a stranger in Megapolis, and I was going around anyway, so I thought I would show——"

"He's not your cousin—not even your cousin?" interrogated the landlady, shaking her head.

"No relation at all," replied Miss Lester, a little self-consciously. "I was merely directing him to some addresses——"

"Oh, jest him wants a room?"

"No, I want one, too. I was going around to look for a room for myself, and Mr Barnett was a stranger in town and didn't know his way——"

"Oh, you two want different rooms?"

"Yes, that's right."

The landlady put up a finger and scratched a russet sector of her hair.

"Now I haven't got no adjoining rooms, y'see. And besides that"—she tipped up her voice in a fresh start—"be-

sides that I'm registered with the Housin' Bureau, and I wouldn't want to lose me registration privilege by havin' —uh—anything unusual in my rooms. They send me a lot of people, the Housin' Bureau does."

"Listen!" cried Miss Lester. "They don't have to be adjoining rooms! They don't even have to be in the same building. I was merely directing Mr Barnett to some addresses——"

"Well—all right," agreed the landlady dubiously. "If they don't have to be in the same building, I guess it will be all right for them to be in my building." She turned and led the way up long staircases which started out with excellent runners, but these swiftly grew worse and deteriorated to rather nappy runners beyond the second floor.

"Now this is my third-floor front," said the landlady, opening a door into a huge and rather grand room with a marble fireplace in one side. This evidently was never used, because it was dustily clean, and some naked radiators were installed close by. A few pieces of dilapidated furniture stood here and there. A tall french window gave a view of the traffic along Riverview Avenue, and one corner of the room had been partitioned off, quite casually, into a kitchenette and a bath.

The landlady stood in silent distrust as the two looked over the apartment.

"Seems all right to me," decided Mr Barnett, with masculine uncriticalness.

"This will be more than I can afford," said Miss Lester, "so, if you want it, Mr Barnett . . . Still, the furniture is—is not very new."

"If it makes any difference which one takes it," interposed the landlady suspiciously, "my third-floor back is just across the hall. It's a small room with an airshaft—well, no, it's really a court—a small court. It's comfortable and very warm in cold weather."

The landlady always recommended her small room for

its comfort in the sort of weather opposite to that which prevailed at the moment. In the winter she praised it as a very cool room in the summer.

The trio went across and looked at the cool-weather room.

"What about the rooms on the second and fourth floors?" inquired Miss Lester.

"I thought they had to be on the same floor?" cross-questioned the landlady, with a sly look in her eyes.

"No, I told you it made no different what floor," ejaculated Miss Lester, embarrassed.

"Well, all right, I'll climb up and down the steps with ye until ye settle down on some floor," offered the landlady, with worn patience.

The three did climb around for a space before they finally decided on the third-floor back and front. Mr Barnett paid five dollars to bind the trade, and then he and Miss Lester went out to have their trunks delivered.

Both the Georgian and the girl were sharply embarrassed.

"We probably shouldn't have gone together," said Miss Lester with rather a flushed face, "but after you were tho nice to me——"

"What I did was nothing," evaded Mr Barnett generously. "The reason everybody is so suspicious in a big city, so much corruption here, and then those very people, quite often, don't lead the right sort of lives themselves."

This sentence was a bit cloudy, but Miss Lester understood that it pointed to their landlady. She looked up at her companion.

"That's the truth," she agreed earnestly.

"If it wasn't for the fresh blood that flowed in from the outside," continued Mr Barnett warmly, "this city would be a regular Sodom and Gomorrah."

Miss Lester nodded intently, with her eyes on those of her companion.

"Well, we'll show her what a gentleman from the South

and a lady from Iowa—— I believe you said you were from Iowa?"

"Yes, I'm from Iowa."

They could have given each other a little hug in the thrill of this declaration of states'-rights morality, but of course neither of them would have dreamed of doing that.

OF MORNINGS AS MR BARNETT shaved in the little bath that had been partitioned off in the corner of his great room, various reflections drifted through his mind. Most of them were of a nature complimentary to himself. There was, of course, the sore spot of the mulatto elevator boy who had struck him and whose instant death Mr Barnett had not succeeded in encompassing. But as he never saw the mulatto again, this gradually paled in his mind from a scarlet sin of omission to a moral pink and was in time forgotten.

At times he attempted to plan something definite about his diploma or certificate or voucher for attendance, whatever it was he finally might receive; but his anxiety about this was not so keen as possibly some of the professors imagined. He already had a number of plans which he meant to put into operation in event he failed to get anything at all. He could have the Georgia educational statute repealed, or repealed for Atlee Country alone, or finally he could go back to his home about the first of the year and just say that he had received a degree from Megapolis University. Then let any man who was sufficiently interested start a *subpoena duces tecum* proceeding against him in chancery to make him show it! Nobody would; nobody cared enough about the matter.

He had not begun his educational labors in Dr Fyke's workshop, because as yet the Doctor had nothing for him

to do. But he would have in a few days. In his daily trips to the workshop he had seen Miss Redeau twice—once as she passed the circle of cannas, another time in the laboratory itself.

Naturally he had seen hundreds—yes, thousands—of other women hurrying across the campus to their classes, leaving a general impression of striding legs, fluttering skirts and strained faces, but Miss Redeau was different. She alone was a soft, svelt, foreign girl whose dark eyes held some sort of mysterious invitation . . . perhaps not an invitation, nothing so forward, merely a dreamy sweetness that existed passively within her. Each time that he had seen her, that caricature of brawn, Chekolokovsky, had been with her. . . . Here Mr Barnett paused in his shaving so that he would not cut himself at the quirk of a smile which this memory provoked.

At this point there came to his ears near-sibilant sounds from Miss Lester in her room. The girl was practising the exercises given in the School of Speech to overcome or at least to modify her lisp. She hoped eventually that she could be graduated and receive her degree from the university.

Since he had moved into his quarters Mr Barnett had seen almost nothing of the Iowa girl. No doubt, she was trying to set at rest the gangrenous suspicions of the landlady. Mr Barnett himself thought this was the wise thing to do. Miss Lester was very pleasant and companionable but not particularly pretty. The only bond the two roomers really had in common was the moral rectitude of their respective states which lifted them above the current scum of Megopolitan profligacy. So it was just as well that they lean a little backward toward each other as an example to their chromatic-haired landlady as to what real Southerners and Midwesterners were.

When Mr Barnett finished his toilet he walked out into the hallway, and a paper, which evidently had been leaned against his door, fell down in front of him.

The Georgian picked it up, a little at sea; he thought possibly the janitor had made a mistake. He did not subscribe for any daily paper. Occasionally he bought one when the newsboys shouted out something that interested him. Therefore his knowledge of current events depended in no small degree on what the newsies chose to feature in their cries. Since this paper had been placed at the wrong door, Mr Barnett thought he would glance over it, then return it to the janitor and explain the error.

When he took it to the window and stretched out his legs in his comfortable old rat nest of a chair, Mr Barnett saw it was a copy of the *Megapole Mimic*, a weekly college publication, of humorous intent, and on its cover was written, in pencil, "*See Page 3.*"

A little at loss, Mr Barnett turned to Page 3, and there found in the "Personalities" column a paragraph again marked with penciled brackets. It read:

POLICYHOLDERS PLEASE NOTE

On a visit to Fyke's Ghost Coop, where he will do some post-graduate work, Colonel Andrew Simpson Barnett, of Atlee County, Georgia, declined to fill out the mental-association questionnaire on the theory that papers meant to be used after the inscribers' death tended to hasten death. To sustain his point he gave a number of examples of fortunate policyholders who, immediately upon the purchase of life-insurance policies, dropped dead and collected immediately. Whether or not this racket could be worked as far north as Megapolis, Colonel Barnett ventured no opinion. The Colonel reports that the Negroes in the South are very superstitious and cling to their ancient African beliefs with an intransigence as regrettable as it is widespread. The Colonel is an expert in this field. This is what originally attracted him to the courses given in Dr Fyke's workshop.

Beneath the paragraph was this sentence, penciled in tiny letters: "*It is a compliment to be mentioned in the Mimic.*"

It was just as well that Miss Lester (for she it was who had propped the paper against the door) added this pri-

vate line to the paragraph, because as Mr Barnett read the insult he concurrently planned to horsewhip the journalism student.

However, if it were a compliment—and Miss Lester would hardly deceive him on the point—he did not want to appear unsophisticated about it, so he gave over the idea. Still he did observe, in a rather acrid humor, the difference between compliments in the North and in the South. In the South a compliment was a compliment. It puffed out the recipient's good points, if he had any, like a toasted marshmallow and left him sticky but sweet. Here in the North, when a man received a compliment, some sympathetic friend had to write a note at the end of it, telling him that it was a compliment. That was the difference between them.

Mr Barnett jumped up and went to Miss Lester's room to question her further on the point. When he tapped on her door he received no answer. He tried once or twice more, but finally give it up and started downstairs to his work. On the ground floor he saw the landlady, with a bottle and with a cloth tied around her hair. He asked if Miss Lester had gone out.

The landlady drew down skeptical lips at such a transparent pretense.

"You don't know she goes out at seven every morning to teach a class?"

"Teach a class—where?"

"Huh—why, the university, of course."

The disgusted thought came to Mr Barnett that, no matter how straitly he and Miss Lester conducted themselves, the landlady would think the same thing on and on.
"What does she teach?"

"The early morning class in the School of Speech that the regular professor don't want to bother with in the summertime."

"Why, that's the very reason they refuse to give her a diploma—speech—but they allow her to teach it!"

"Well, she has took it now for five years and knows it jest as good as the professors do—and ever'body understands what she says even if she does lisp."

"Why, that's outrageous!" cried Mr Barnett, "—have the poor girl teach in the hot weather here in the university, and won't give her a degree so she can teach other places when the weather gets cooler! It's a shame!" And he went, grumbling, into the street.

The landlady looked after him with a superior, knowing smile. She had seen men before pretend to know nothing about the women who roomed on the same floor with them. Then she took the cloth from around her hair and began applying the contents of the bottle to each particular lock with her fingertips.

In Dr Fyke's laboratory, Mr Barnett found Miss Moe sitting at the information desk alone. The hour would have been late in the South, but it was quite early for Megapolis, and the men and women who would take the mental-association tests were not yet admitted to the building.

When Miss Moe saw the Georgian, she arose and said in quite a bright tone that she wanted to congratulate him. When he inquired the reason for her felicitations, she answered:

"Why, the article written about you in the college paper. Dr Fyke didn't know that you had done research work in folk superstitions!"

Mr Barnett's face reddened.

"Listen," he protested, "I didn't authorize that article in the *Mimic*—"

"*Mimic?*" echoed Miss Moe in surprise. "This isn't in the *Mimic*, it's in the *Review*." Her tone bespoke the dignity of the *Review* as she fished in one of the bags, produced the journal and spread the article before his eyes.

Mr Barnett took it and looked it over with some misgivings. It was a straightforward account saying that he had done research in white and Negro folk superstitions

in the South and that he might pursue these studies in Megapolis University. It was quite as irritating in its way as the article in the *Mimic*.

"Why, I didn't authorize this, either," he broke out.
"I don't know anything about—"

"Dr Fyke says, never allow personal feelings to interfere with your publicity. Now Dr Fyke himself is a very modest man. You wouldn't think so, but he is. In the beginning he shrank from publicity. Then he took himself in hand, he said to himself, 'Look here, I am an institution. I must use my best endeavors to obtain all the benefits possible for myself as an institution. That is only co-operative loyalty. The greatest benefit any institution can possibly possess is good will. But good will is nothing but favorable publicity. Therefore I must use my best endeavors to obtain favorable publicity.' For instance, now he keeps two publicity agents employed all the time. In just this morning's paper one of them had a notice that Dr Fyke would spend the summer in Nova Zembla in anthropological research for a book he is going to write. Tomorrow the other publicity man will print a note saying that Dr Fyke will not be able to go to Nova Zembla this summer, as he is too busy on his book, *How You Get Your Heat from the Sun*. It will all be good publicity for Dr Fyke and the last note will help sell the book, too."

Mr Barnett considered this.

"Well, is that entirely truthful?" he inquired, with the human urge toward a most meticulous truthfulness in other people's doings.

"Dr Fyke says it is. This is the way he looks at it. The newspapers reflect life. And not only the doings but the thoughts of the leading men of the day mold life. Therefore when any idea passes through the mind of a prominent man like Dr Fyke it should be reflected in the newspapers as a complete record of our civilization, psychological as well as factual. And Dr Fyke really did think of going to Nova Zembla, although he knew he couldn't go."

There were several paper shopping bags full of pamphlets, newspaper clippings, letters, books and what not beside Miss Moe's chair. Now, with that sense of distaste which every man feels when a woman persists in talking of another man, the Georgian attempted to brush Dr Fyke's name out of the conversation by asking roundly:

"Well, what are you going to do with all this stuff here?"

"That? Oh, that was what I started to tell you about—Dr Fyke sent it to you."

"Sent it to me?"

"Yes, as soon as he found out in the college paper that you were a research man in folk superstition, he saw his chance to do something with you. It suggested to him a book which he will call, *Your Superstition—Is It True?* Now you are to take this material, arrange it in logical order, make an outline of it, then hand your outline to Mr Eldo, who will write the first draft of the book."

"Doesn't Dr Fyke write his own books?"

"Certainly not. Dr Fyke can't afford to write his own books. He values his time at two hundred dollars a day. Unless he is doing something that will produce that much money a day, he can't afford to do it himself, so he has one of his secretaries or one of his students do it for him—so his institution won't lose money."

"I see. It's a sort of impersonal thing," said Mr Barnett, marveling.

"Oh yes, completely. Dr Fyke incorporated himself years ago. He signs all his legal papers, 'Dr Fyke, Incorporated.' "

Mr Barnett stood considering this rather emptily when suddenly a personal phase of the matter struck his attention.

"Look here, Miss Moe," he demurred, "I came up here to get my degree, or certificate, or recommendation, whatever I do get, in school management. That's what I'm go-

ing to do—manage schools. Now I don't want to get switched off into superstitions——”

Miss Moe laughed.

“Maybe the two aren't so different. . . . No, no, that's a joke, I didn't mean that. . . . No, this is the real point, especially in the field of education: When you come to Megapolis University, it doesn't make any difference what you study under these great professors; the whole kernel of the thing is that you have had some sort of work under them. That's the thing that counts. You go back to Georgia. You say you have had work under the great Dr Fyke. There you are. That means something. Everybody knows Dr Fyke. They have read his books. If anybody asks you what you studied, just tell them plain out, 'Folk superstitions.' Then they will immediately think that you know everything in the educational field up to folk superstitions, and they will think more highly of you than ever.”

Mr Barnett, being a county politician, knew that this was true in politics, and he suddenly perceived a psychological continuity between the field of education and the field of politics. He began gathering up the shopping bags.

“Now just what do I do with these?” he inquired.

“Take them into one of those rooms, read them carefully and make your outline, as I told you. Be sure and start with the most interesting anecdote, then drop back to the least interesting, then work up to the most startling anecdote you can find. That is the logical method to arrange your material from a psychological angle.”

“Well, all right. . . . Most interesting . . . least interesting . . . most startling—I can remember that.”

“Hold on, wait, don't go in that door. That room is occupied. Mr Derekson is in there popularizing a work on mathematics. When Dr Fyke gets the book written he will call it, *How You Can Measure the Distance to the Moon.*”

Mr Barnett took his bags of papers into the office which

Miss Moe pointed out and began preparing for the continuous reading and classification of his material.

As a start he marked a large work table into squares, then laid off each square into three rectangles which he labeled "dull," "interesting," "very interesting." Each square would contain a topic, and its material would be divided according to its interest. With this schema for a popularization of science he sat down in a swivel chair and began his reading.

The first articles that Mr Barnett picked up all went into the "very interesting" rectangles. Dr Fyke, or more likely some of Dr Fyke's secretaries, had made a very interesting collection of notes and newspaper clippings of superstitions in many lands. However, no two of these "very interesting" items seemed to fall under the same topic and go into the same square. Presently it became necessary for Mr Barnett to draw some more squares on the table to hold his expanding layout. He did this, then seated himself once more in the swivel chair by the window, leaned back and proceeded to read in great comfort.

Outside the window, when he looked, the sky was of a grayish blue which would have meant rain in the South but which betokened fair weather in Megapolis.

Afar off, over a distant roof, the Georgian could see a flock of pigeons circling around and around a tiny figure which waved a white rag on a pole. At a certain sector of their circle the pigeons appeared to be made of shimmering silver; at another they were almost invisible.

Mr Barnett blinked, erased the pigeons from his eyes and returned more resolutely to his reading. The articles he now read he began filing in the "interesting" rectangles. After fifteen or twenty minutes of this he placed them in the spaces that were labeled "dull."

Into the Megapolis sky climbed two kites, a red one and a green one. One rode the air quite steadily, but one swayed back and forth and reminded Mr Barnett of a Georgia share cropper coming back to his home on Christ-

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mas evening. Presently an airplane glided across his window, too levelly to be a silver swallow . . . a book on airplanes . . . but he supposed that already had been done. . . . When he went back to Georgia he thought he would fly as far as Atlanta by airplane. He need not let his wife, Matilda, know. He would simply step into his home and tell her that he had flown from Megapolis to Atlanta . . . and what a retrospective fright Tildy would fall into. . . . She would . . .

Mr Barnett was smiling at the scare he would give his wife when he made a sudden kick and jerk and sat upright in his swivel chair, scattering his notes around him. He blinked his eyes and looked about rather foolishly. Then he drew out his watch to see the hour. It was almost noon.

As a matter of fact Mr Barnett had never been able to read anything for any length of time without falling asleep. Now the student of school management looked ruefully at his bags of notes on superstition as he recalled this weakness in himself. It had not occurred to him that it might have some bearing on a possible scholastic career. As he sat pondering what to do, he remembered that little Mr Derekson was in Dr Fyke's workshop preparing a book on mathematics. It was nearly noon, so he picked up his desk telephone, called the mathematician and asked him to lunch.

The voice of Derekson said that he already had an engagement to lunch with a friend of his named Schmalkin, but if Mr Barnett didn't mind a triangular lunch, he would be very glad to have him as his guest.

"*'Triangular lunch,'*" thought the Georgian, "is the result of having a mathematical mind." He got up, bathed his face in the little lavatory that was provided with each office, then, having removed from his eyes all traces of his labor over Dr Fyke's forthcoming book on superstition, he went forth to lunch with Derekson.

When Mr Barnett met his luncheon companions, Mr Schmalkin turned out to be a melancholy little man with

a thin face and a thin nose set under a high lined forehead. Indeed, he almost might have been a caricature of Mr Derekson.

When Mr Barnett was introduced to Mr Schmalkin, the little man began groping through his briefcase, drew out a number of mechanical blueprints, finally produced a paper and turned to an article in it.

"Yes, Barnett . . . Barnett," he repeated in the careful voice of a foreigner. "I remembered the name in the *Review*. I was pleased for some American to write about superstition."

The Georgian was made uncomfortable at this reminder of the article which the student of journalism had written about him. He broke in, with some embarrassment:

"I never intended to give out any such article as that for publication."

The little Russian inclined his head understandingly.

"You intended to express yourself more perfectly in a book of your own?"

"On superstition?" inquired Mr Barnett. "Why, no, I don't mean to write a book on superstition."

"It would well be worth some man's while," asserted the little Russian earnestly. "A revival of superstition might cure the sickness of our Western world."

"Might cure the—what?"

"Certainly, it is obvious," declared Schmalkin, with a kind of nervous intensity. "Superstition is the great human fortress of spiritual strength. If some man could write a new Bible of superstition, modern enough for people to believe . . ."

Mr Barnett looked across the table at Derekson to see if he knew what Schmalkin was talking about.

The Scandinavian lifted a shoulder, as if to say, "Don't ask me what a Russian means."

"Of course you don't really mean that superstition is good for people," rebegan Mr Barnett, in some bewilderment.

"On the contrary, I think it is the only thing that is good for them," asserted Schmalkin, both surprised and argumentative. "How do you explain the edifying and constructive force of the Hebrew Bible over large sections of the human race for thousands of years?"

"Oh," protested Mr Barnett, catching Schmalkin's deplorable Northern slant against Christianity, "there are people who don't consider that superstition."

"Yes, yes, that's true," brushed aside the little man. "Well, pick out something you know is superstition."

"And you'll defend it? You'll show it's a—a fortress of strength?" inquired Mr Barnett, beginning to be amused.

"It won't need a defense. It will be, on the face of it, a great salutary agent in human life."

Mr Barnett cast back for something really indefensible among the colored people of the South.

"All right, take this one: The Negroes believe that, when a woman is in childbirth, it will cut her pain in two if they put a sharp axe under her bed. What do you make of that?"

"That is good, it is typical," accepted the little man with his nervous attack. "There the axe under the bed is the symbol. A symbol is a material focus of a spiritual force. The axe is on the same plane with the crucifixes, images and beads in the service of the churches, only it is more specific, and therefore a more potent symbol—"

"Wait—hold on there! You are bringing in religion again!" objected Mr Barnett.

"But do you not see it is all the same thing?" protested Mr Schmalkin. "Religion, superstition, whatever you wish to call it, they make great cures. They present a symbol around which to focus the strength of the spirit. They aid the flesh to overcome all ills by the direct fiat of the soul. On the other hand, surgery, *materia medica* and modern modes of cure are the opposite of that. They allow human beings to escape pain without spiritual effort. Nothing is cultivated except the simple vegetative powers which are

common to plants and animals. Our medical practice is a waste of the opportunity in pain and weakness to achieve greater spiritual strength. So we moderns retrograde from the high goal toward which our faces once were turned."

The Russian was so much in earnest that Mr Barnett asked curiously:

"Just what high goal, Mr Schmalkin?"

The little man looked at him intently.

"Did it never occur to you that the development of the ability in the soul to overcome the ills of the flesh might lead to a complete freedom from the flesh?"

Mr Barnett did not instantly follow this logic and looked his puzzlement. The little man explained:

"I mean if the soul works toward a greater freedom from matter, why will it not one day shake off its shackles and stand liberated?"

Here Mr Derekson broke out laughing.

"There you've got him, Barnett. You've chased the old fox to his hole at last—a fox that has played hide and seek with mankind since Creation."

Mr Schmalkin seemed a trifle crestfallen at this.

"Then why should people grope through the practice of ritual and superstition and prayer to spiritual strength, if not to triumph in the supreme test?"

"The elenchus being," cut in Derekson, "there is no logical connection between a living body that can cure itself through mental suggestion—and a dead body that rots."

The Russian sat in silence for several moments and at last said grayly:

"That's a defensive argument, Derekson. You are defending your bread and butter now that you get from Dr Fyke."

"Why, how's that?" inquired Mr Barnett curiously.

"Well, he's working for Fyke, calculating probabilities in the matter of the French girl who is Fyke's medium," nodded the Russian.

Mention of the French girl picked up the Georgian's interest.

"What sort of probability?" he inquired.

Derekson answered for himself, in a slightly annoyed tone:

"Oh, it's just the probability that some person whose card is in the mental-association files will return after his death and identify himself by repeating what he wrote on his card when he was alive."

Mr Barnett stared in amazement.

"Is that what those cards are for?"

"Yes, it is the first purely scientific approach to—"

"Why, no dead person will ever come back to identify his card!" cried Mr Barnett.

"That is exactly what Dr Fyke is attempting to prove—that none will!" cried Schmalkin, with some warmth.

"Prove with the cards—that they do not come back!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, still more astonished.

"Now, now, Schmalkin, that is utterly unfair!" cried Derekson. "Dr Fyke is not trying to prove *anything*. He is simply experimenting—let the experiment come out as it will. He himself is neutral. He is a scientist."

"Yes—scientist!" scoffed Schmalkin. "As though all scientists were not—marionettes!" He snapped his fingers scornfully. "Marionettes caught in the web of the historic moment, functioning, willy-nilly, to establish mankind's predestined hallucination."

As this was completely over Mr Barnett's head, he steered his luncheon companions back to something he could follow:

"Well, now, these cards—I don't understand how they work."

Mr Derekson brushed this aside casually:

"Oh, if none of the cards are ever identified and more and more are added to the list, then there would be an increasing probability against the immortality of the human soul—you see that, don't you?"

Mr Barnett did his face into painful wrinkles of thought.

"Well—sort of—— No-o, I don't see it."

"Look here, a thousand men die, and I have a thousand cards which they have written. Now if one of these men appears to the medium and can repeat his card, that would prove immortality, wouldn't it?"

"Ye-es—ye-es—I suppose it would."

"But if none of them can repeat their cards, then that would tend to prove they are fakes, and that they are not real souls returned to earth—and the greater the number of cards Fyke has, the stronger would be his presumption against immortality."

Mr Schmalkin cut in here sharply:

"Yes, and that is what Fyke is really trying to prove—the nonexistence of the soul. That idea is part of our historic moment." The small man's voice tautened, and he pointed a finger at the Southerner. "If man were proved immortal, our whole materialistic civilization would collapse. Immortal beings would have too much dignity to be herded into armies to murder each other. It would be sacrilegious to set apart hundreds of thousands of men and women and starve them in order to save the wheat they would consume. But if they are not immortal, if they are mere collections of vital cells, then they can properly be equated against wheat, which also is a collection of vital cells. Certainly, save the cells which are the more useful for the time being. That is the materialistic philosophy which Dr Fyke is trying to prove!"

The three men now were rising from the table. Their disagreement had finished their meal rather prematurely. Mr Schmalkin picked up the check and started toward the cash register.

Mr Barnett made the usual gesture of trying to take the bill, when the Russian looked at it, then turned to the Southerner quite blankly.

"Did—did you write on this check?" he asked, moistening his lips with his tongue.

"I—no—is it too much?"

"Oh no, no, not too much. Did you write on it, Derekson?"

"No, I didn't write on it—what's wrong with it?" asked Derekson.

Mr Schmalkin glanced about over the table in the lunch-room with a quick sweep of his eyes. Then he held the check toward his two companions. Across its face was written in pencil:

"Be careful—someone may overhear."

BARNETT AND DEREKSON finally decided that the cautionary message on the restaurant's pay check must have been scribbled there by the printer when the slips were made. This was reasonable in view of the strikes and lock-outs and stool pigeons that infest American labor. Some pressman perhaps had thought some other employee was pro- or anti-union, and he had warned someone who was at work on the block of tickets.

Schmalkin accepted this explanation and then left his luncheon companions to return to the Faraday laboratory.

"What does he do at the laboratory?" inquired Barnett absently, still thinking of the pay check.

"He's one of the electricians working on a new broadcasting improvement. I am doing some mathematical work on the same thing—that's how I came to know him."

"He has odd ideas," offered Mr Barnett, unable any longer to restrain himself from talking about his new acquaintance.

Mr Derekson laughed a little.

"Yes, he seems to be on the side of the angels," said the Scandinavian, using the phrase to express the playful derogation of religious thinking which it carries in the North. "However, he has had experiences that have forced him into a more or less religious defense."

"You mean in Russia?" questioned the Southerner.

"Yes, he comes from the Ukraine. When the Russian government allowed several hundred thousand persons to starve in order to store up wheat and establish a foreign credit, several of Schmalkin's family were the victims. He himself nearly perished. One of his sisters, he told me, burst open."

Mr Barnett wrinkled his face in horror.

"My God!"

"That's what he meant, you know, when he was saying, 'If wheat and flesh are both mere vital cells, then you can save one or the other, whichever you choose'—something like that."

The Georgian nodded. The idea made him slightly sick.

"You see how it would make him want to believe people do have souls, to—you know—to revenge in his own mind what the Bolsheviks did to his people in the Ukraine."

"I declare we people in America don't know what other people have to endure," platitudinized Mr Barnett in Southern fashion.

"Of course the conflict with Schmalkin is," went on Mr Derekson, "that he is a scientist, just the same as you and I. His whole outlook and training have been entirely materialistic. Now here he is jerked up short by this tragedy, and his impulse, you know, is to believe his people were better than the wheat they were spent for. Of course—at bottom—I don't suppose they really were. They were just two forms of life; one was wheat and one was a family. But poor old Schmalkin is driven by this damnable thing—if it really were damnable, and not merely an economic necessity—he is driven to all the old primitive beliefs in superstition and religion and crucifixes and idols and fetishes and prayers and bell ringing, for his sense of logic sees they all belong together—and he defends them all—a nauseous intellectual stew—because his father, mother, two brothers and a sister starved to death in the Ukraine."

Mr Barnett shook his head, apparently in that silent sympathy which one man extends to another when he is

stating an obvious truth, but as a matter of fact the Georgian was slightly shocked at this sweeping condemnation of all matters religious.

Personally he never thought about such things and had no faith in them whatsoever, except that he did reserve in the corner of his mind a kind of "No-Logic's-Land" in which was located the tenets of the Southern Methodist Church.

To be specific, Mr Barnett believed in the words of the creed of the Southern Methodist Church. They were a fuzzy set of words which held no very clear-cut meaning at all, but Mr Barnett felt that a deep, everlasting truth shimmered over the phrases themselves, just as acid and lead produce electricity, without anybody understanding quite how it is done. And on these deep, fundamental truths hung the safety of the Southern Methodist Church for time and eternity, and—incidentally—the fate of the rest of the world. Not that he, Mr Barnett, cared particularly about any of it, but he was a little shocked at what Derekson had said.

He did not discuss it further, because it was a bit too irreverent for his taste.

When the mathematician left him, the Southerner continued smiling a little pityingly to himself to think how far gone the North was in ungodliness and irreligiosity, when he saw ahead of him Miss Redeau and Mr Chekolkovsky on their way to Dr Fyke's laboratory in the Psychology Building.

Mr Barnett never could bear to be alone if there was any way to avoid it, so now he hurried up to the couple ahead, bade them "good evening," by which he meant "good afternoon," and tossed off absently to the football player, "How are you, Mr Knollichucky?" then continued: "And how are you, Miss Redeau? About what hour do you think you will get through with Dr Fyke's work this evening?"

The girl looked around in astonishment.

"Why, M'sieu Barnette, why do you not like M'sieu Chekolokovsky?"

"Why don't I like him? What makes you think I don't like——"

"Because when you speak to thees gentleman, you call heem Meester Knollichucky and not Meester Chekolokovsky. Dr Fyke says that shows you do not like heem."

Mr Barnett was quite bewildered.

"Oh, nonsense! That's all superstition. I have barely met Mr Chekolokovsky—why should I dislike him?"

"That ees what I ask you," persisted the girl.

"I can't say—I have no reason to dislike Mr Chekolokovsky."

"Perhaps I can ask you about the eenside of your mind and help you, as Dr Fyke does his patients?"

"By all means, go right to work on the inside of my mind," and Mr Barnett smiled at Mr Chekolokovsky, who remained sober.

"Very well—what ees Knollichucky?"

"Well—it's a river—it's a river in the South."

"Ah, a reever—that ees very signefecant."

"Yes—and what does it signify?" inquired the Georgian, with the pleasure a man takes in discussing anything about himself.

"A reever runs—that ees what you want Meester Chekolokovsky to do—run. Ah ha! That ees eet, Meester Barnette; you want Meester Chekolokovsky to run away—and you shall have your weesh, that ees not yet in the top of your mind. Go away, Checky, go somewhere else. Meester Barnette, in hees heart, weeshes you to run away."

The big football man grumbled out:

"Oh, Marie, that's all poppycock—just because he mis-called my——"

"Yes, but eet ees hees weesh."

"No, no, really it isn't," protested the Georgian, laughing. "Not exactly. It isn't that I don't want you all to my-

self—of course I do—but my pity for Mr Chekolokovsky forbids——”

“No, your peety is nothing but good manners,” decided the girl, “or you would not have called heem Meester Knollichucky. So run on away, Checky.”

The athlete drew down the thick lips in his heavily molded face, shrugged a little, gave the French girl a slap on the hip.

“O.K., see you after your show tonight,” and he swung on his heel, evidently accustomed to her whims.

Miss Redneau looked after him.

“Eesn’t he an animal! . . . And now what deed you want, Meester Barnette?”

“You mean some actual definite want?” asked the Southerner, becoming a shade more serious.

“Yes—what ees eet?”

“Why, I was just speaking to both of you, I was pleased to be with you; it was just an accident that I called Mr Chekolokovsky by the wrong——”

“*Non, non*, Dr Fyke he says thees theengs nevaire just happen. He says there ees always something——”

“Well, I’m sure I don’t know what.”

“I weel help you. When deed you first see me, Meester Barnette?”

“Last week in Dr Fyke’s office.”

“And what deed you theenk about me then?”

“You really want to know?” inquired the Southerner, gathering courage by this time to say what was in his thoughts.

“*Oui, m’sieu*’, really.”

“Well, when I saw you inside the office, and then saw Mr Chekolokovsky waiting for you outside the office door——”

“Oh, you saw heem out there!”

“Yes—I just thought what a pity it was to have a——”

“Oh, go on—go on, Meester Barnette!”

"Well, so much beef and brawn waiting for such a sensitive, flowerlike——"

"Oh, Meester Barnette, I am not sensiteeve and flowerlike!"

Mr Barnett began to laugh.

"Now, now, I don't have to argue when you already agree with me. I don't have to study under Dr Fyke to know that."

"Then I am not sensiteeve."

"You must be sensitive, too, or you wouldn't be a—an assistant to Dr Fyke."

"You deed not mean to say at first, 'asseestant,' you meant to say 'medioom.' "

"Well—perhaps."

"Why deed you not say it?"

"Well—I don't know. It is just something you don't quite say. I don't know why."

"I would find that out, too, eef I had time," nodded Miss Redeau.

They were indeed now coming to the entrance of Psychology Hall. Mr Barnett felt that sense of privation which an adolescent feels when he is about to part with any agreeable girl.

"Listen, suppose we arrange a time," he suggested, halting on the steps. "If you have nothing to do, suppose we go to a show tonight."

Miss Redeau lifted a shoulder.

"Oh, you would rather go to a show than talk to me?"

"Both, both," protested Mr Barnett in serio-jest. "The worst shows finally get finished, and then we could dig seriously into what I meant when I said you were an assistant——"

"Meester Barnette, I am very sorrie, but I have an engagement thees evening."

"Mm-mm—tomorrow evening?"

"I am verrie verrie sorrie, but I have an engagement also tomorrow night."

"With"—the Georgian nodded his head—"Mr What's-his-name, I suppose?"

"*Oui—weeth Checky,*" nodded the girl in amused agreement.

Mr Barnett drew down wry, humorous lips.

"Well, it serves me right. In fact I suspect a special Providence is taking care of me and you."

"Me—special Providence—and you?"

"Yes. I really shouldn't call on the ladies. Down South we are not supposed to, although we sometimes do when we come up North."

"You mean men down South do not call on ladies?"

"We are not supposed to."

"You are not all seek?"

"Oh no, no, I mean married men—we are not supposed to go out and call on——"

The French girl opened her eyes.

"Oh—a man of the world! I do weesh I could break my engagement and go weeth you to a show tonight, Meester Barnette, but Checky he ees such a jealous fellow."

M R BARNETT stood looking over the university grounds with that slightly deflated feeling which a man experiences immediately after a pretty woman has left him. His quips, his jests, his sprightly manner suddenly were wiped out. And in this mood the Georgian began to reflect on his own uncertain and unrewarding position in the university. What would it benefit him to arrange Dr Fyke's material in the form of a book? He would get no degree. As for that generalized culture which literary labor is supposed to produce, he didn't need that; he needed a certificate of some description saying that he had it. He was going to be a school superintendent.

Here a thought struck across his mind that Miss Redeau had talked in a very odd fashion. . . . She had regretted not being able to entertain him that evening *if* he was a married man! That was an odd thing for a woman to say. . . . And then Chekolokovsky slapping her on that rather graceful curve below her waist, and her not resenting it in the least . . . that was rather odd. It seemed that Northern women did not possess that carefulness of contact with persons of the opposite sex which adorned the womanhood of the . . . He did not finish his sonorous period, but let it die away in his head amid rhetorical overtones. He felt depressed.

He really had fallen into rather irrational surround-

ings, after all. The great university buildings, placed helter-skelter over the grounds, seemed disunited among themselves—and in what they taught. Students, men and women, all nearing or past middle age, hurried to and fro in pursuit of an illumination that would shine with a changed light on the following year.

Most of them could barely meet the expenses of the summer term, but school laws and board rulings kept them hurrying about the university buildings, unlearning what they had learned the previous semester and learning what they would unlearn the next.

And now, Mr Barnett reflected, he himself had gone to the Georgia legislature and made a law that required even school superintendents to have a college degree. The next step, he foresaw, county superintendents would be forced to attend summer schools along with their teachers, and then the umbilical cord between life and education would be severed.

Here Mr Barnett's sober reflections were interrupted by his fellow roomer, Miss Lester, passing along the walk within two feet of him. Naturally she did not see him. No person who has lived in Megapolis for any length of time ever recognizes anybody on the street. Such recognitions are always made by the newcomers.

Now, however, Mr Barnett's mood was such that he almost did not hurry after Miss Lester and acquaint her of his presence. He *almost* did not, but he did, because such detachment does not exist in persons newly arrived from the South. So he caught up with her and asked her what she was doing.

Miss Lester herself was pleasantly surprised. She had been going to the university for five years, and after that length of time it was almost startling to be addressed by her own name as she walked through the grounds. She said she had been attending one of her classes in the School of Speech. She had a number of classes, apparently, all trying to cure her lisp. Mr Barnett asked her how she was

getting along, then without waiting for an answer slid off into his own disappointment by saying playfully that he had just tried to make a date with a young lady and had been turned down.

"Serves you right," declared Miss Lester, just as playfully. "What would your wife say to that?"

"Now you are making a joke of it," returned Mr Barnett. "But it isn't such a joke. It may possibly be a very good thing for me—really, I mean it."

"Look here," ejaculated Miss Lester, rather amused, "are you for or against being turned down by the young lady? I want to know which side you are on."

"I'm for it."

"Why?"

"Well, of course I love my wife dearly, but, you know, up here in the North, where divorces are in the atmosphere and nothing is thought about leaving one woman and marrying another—well, I really think it is a very good thing that the girl wouldn't let me go with her—not that anything would have happened, mind you—I'm sure it wouldn't—but—you know—if you never get in the water you can't drown."

Miss Lester had kindly, pretty eyes, and now they grew kindlier.

"You are a very thweet person, Mr Barnett. Out in Iowa, too, they have some regard for marriage vows. It does a woman good to see a man who really has some finer feelings about marriage, or at least that is the way we Iowa women feel."

"And the South, too," added Mr Barnett earnestly.

"Oh, certainly, certainly," concurred Miss Lester at once. "Everybody knows about the Southern women." She hesitated, then added, "I never have known but two Southern girls personally, but—of course—they might have been exceptions."

"Oh well, of course, there *are* women in the South—" began Mr Barnett, when Miss Lester interrupted to agree:

"Of course, of course. . . . Uh—who ith the lady who wouldn't give you a date?"

"Don't suppose you know her. She's one of Dr Fyke's assistants—a Miss Redeau——"

Miss Lester drew a little breath.

"Oh yes. . . . No, I don't *know* her. I've heard of her."

"Yes, I suppose you have—she's a medium."

"Yes, that's it—a medium—she's a medium."

Mr Barnett looked oddly at his fellow roomer.

"Well, she is a medium. What made you say it in that tone?"

"Did I say it in a tone?"

"Yes, you did."

"I—don't know why."

The Southerner studied his companion intently for a moment.

"Now Miss Redeau could tell you why if she were here. She would make something out of it."

"What?" inquired Miss Lester, rather pointedly.

"I don't know what, but she would make something out of it that would surprise you."

Miss Lester seemed in some way annoyed with Miss Redeau.

"Well, there are other surprising things about Mith Redeau. . . . Well, I don't know that they are really surprising here in the East, but they would be surprising in Iowa."

"Go ahead—tell me what they are," pressed Mr Barnett.

"I—I hate to, because I know how gallant you Southern men are toward all women no matter what—what sort they are."

Mr Barnett came to a halt and stood staring at Miss Lester.

"You—you don't mean that?"

"Now, I wouldn't have told you, Mr Barnett, but you are such a nice man, I just couldn't see you——"

"Well, I declare!" ejaculated the Georgian, quite taken down. "You don't mean that—that she——"

"I'm afraid so, Mr Barnett," assented the woman sadly. "According to what I have heard she is not just—just a liberal-minded girl, but she accepts things more valuable than just theater ticketh and dinnerth and things like that. . . . I wouldn't dream of telling you this if—if you weren't such a nice man yourself, Mr Barnett."

"Huh! . . . Well, I hope it's a mistake," said Mr Barnett, with a twinge in his chest as he thought of Mr Chekolovsky.

"Oh, so do I," agreed Miss Lester earnestly.

The two stood a moment longer, each touched with that feeling of shadowy indulgence which comes to men and women when they discuss with each other certain topics that once were taboo. Then Miss Lester made her adieu and went on to their rooming house.

Mr Barnett was still standing looking after the Iowa girl when a tall, horse-faced boy stopped on the walk near him and asked if this was not Mr Barnett.

The Southerner looked at the youth with a middle-aged man's inability to recognize any boy whom he has not known for a period of at least six months.

"I'm Fargason Medway," reminded the young man. "My father, Mr Philip Medway, introduced me to you some bit ago. He said if I ever needed any advice of any kind I might come to you, and—and I'm on my way to see the dean now."

"And you need advice?" questioned the Georgian, still shocked at what he had learned about Miss Redeau.

"Well, when a fellow is going to see the dean he naturally needs advice about what to say to him."

"Ye-es, I suppose advice would come in handy at just that point," agreed Mr Barnett.

Young Fargason Medway hesitated.

"Well, now, if you feel stuffy about it, I'm sorry I barged in on you."

"Oh no, no, no," disclaimed Mr Barnett, quite surprised at anything so human coming out of a youth of Medway's age. "No, as a matter of fact, I—I have just been rather disturbed myself, Medway."

"I wouldn't have thought you would be disturbed about anything," said Fargason, without interest in what troubled his adviser.

"I shouldn't be," admitted Mr Barnett. "I really shouldn't. . . . Now what is it wrong with you?"

"I wonder if you have time to come along with me to the dean's office."

"To talk for you?"

"No, I can talk for myself. To lend me your moral support."

"Yes, I'll go. Perhaps you'd better tell me what you've done to be called up before the——"

"Oh, nothing that any decent fellow wouldn't do," said Fargason. "I organized a five-minute sit-down strike in the junior and sophomore classes as a protest against Italy's sending troops into Spain."

Mr Barnett stood looking at the young man.

"Organized it here—in the university?"

"Certainly—why not?"

"What—what good did it do?"

"Publicity—publicity. But come on with me to the dean's office. That will be a question the dean will ask."

Amid his disturbance about Miss Redeau, the Georgian wondered briefly why young Medway was so centered on publicity; then, as the two went on to the dean's office, his thoughts returned to the French girl once more.

Young Medway, however, talked on at a great rate. He had thrown himself into the struggle, he said, to eradicate those social, religious and economic fetishes which had enslaved mankind since the Paleolithic Age.

Mr Barnett interposed absently that one had to use judgment in discarding old customs, old monetary systems and old gods.

"Certainly, certainly," agreed the young man readily. "In their places communism will implant that impulse toward justice which is natural to the human heart."

"How do you explain the execution of about a third of the ranking officers in the bolshevik army?" inquired Mr Barnett.

"That is a liquidation of material unsuitable for the communistic personnel," returned young Medway, with the promptness of a catechumen.

"I see. Justice starts after the personnel becomes suitable."

Young Medway was genuinely surprised.

"The highest good that can come to any nation is the political solidarity of its people," he quoted.

Just here an uncertain illumination passed through Mr Barnett's mind that, just as at the lowest levels of mankind the individual should be suppressed for the advancement of society, so at the highest human levels society should be subordinated to the individual. That was what Christ had taught, according to the creed of the Southern Methodist Church. It was a doctrine based on the idea that man was immortal; that he was preparing himself for an existence higher than a national existence; that he really was preparing himself for a spiritual existence.

None of this, however, was sure and clear cut in Mr Barnett's thought; he could not have put it into words. It was, no doubt, just an unscientific residue of wishful thinking and Southern Methodist folklore, of which, perhaps, Megapolis University might purge his mind if he remained in residence long enough.

And at any rate there was no need for Mr Barnett to put all this into words, because just here he and young Medway entered the Administration Building, and on the second floor they found the dean's office.

Young Fargason Medway, undoubtedly, had been to see Dean Overbrook many times before, because he intro-

duced Mr Barnett with the air of a young man well acquainted with his surroundings.

Mr Barnett was just on the verge of following the Southern habit and inquiring from what family of Overbrooks the dean had sprung, when the dean himself repeated:

"Oh, Barnett—Barnett. You are the gentleman from Georgia, are you not, who has come up here for a fractional-time degree?"

"I'm afraid I am," admitted Mr Barnett, slightly uncomfortable.

"Mr Stahl mentioned you to me," explained the dean.

"What do you mean—a fractional-time degree?" inquired young Medway.

The dean explained the sedate academic jest that was wrapped up in the phrase, and Mr Barnett, in order that he might not appear altogether the Philistine, felt constrained to add why he wanted it.

Young Mr Medway at once championed the Georgian's side. He said that when it came to a question of which should take precedence, a mandate of an independent state of the American union or the judgment of a group of college professors, there should be no question about—

"Medway, mandate to do what?" interposed the dean, with some sarcasm.

"A mandate that Mr Barnett should receive a degree," stated the young man warmly.

"And how do you arrive at that conclusion?"

"The state of Georgia made a law that all county superintendents must have a college degree. Then afterwards the state of Georgia elects Mr Barnett as a county superintendent; therefore, by inference, the state of Georgia considers Mr Barnett as worthy of a college degree and there is an inferred mandate on some college to grant him one."

The dean began to smile.

"That mandate would operate directly upon the Uni-

versity of Georgia, would it not, and would leave untouched the rights, privileges and prerogatives of Megapolis University?"

"No, I think not. I think the rule of comity between nations would apply here, and Mr Barnett could sue the University of Megapolis for a degree which was implied by the legislation of the state of Georgia. At least that is my idea of the totalitarian state."

The dean nodded with amused eyes at the young man.

"I imagine you were one of those zealots who advocated changing the Supreme Court in order to legalize the recent illegal acts of Congress. It's the same logic."

Young Medway made a gesture.

"Well, I am sorry if we can't agree. The only consolation I see is that the recent acts of Congress didn't go far enough to make their status as laws of any very great moment one way or the other. Good day, and good-by to you, Mr Barnett." Young Medway bowed himself out of the office, and a moment later the older men heard him clattering down the stairs.

In the midst of this noise the dean suddenly got out of his chair and started for the door, calling the young man's name. He repeated this call two or three times through his open door, then presently came back and looked out the window onto the campus walks. He must have seen nothing, because he returned to his desk, sat down and explained, with a slight smile at himself, that he had sent Medway a note to come and see him, and now the boy technically had come, had seen him and had gone.

What the youth had done put both the older men in a genial mood. Dean Overbrook began philosophizing on the incident.

"Young Medway is a product of one of the modern private schools here in the city," he explained. "I think he means to be a public-service man. You know, it's an extraordinary thing that just at the point where our educational system swings to extreme individualism, our gov-

ernmental tendency is toward communism, fascism and concentrated federal power."

"A swing-back of the pendulum," suggested Mr Barnett easily.

"Unfortunately that metaphor holds no substantial content. The reason a pendulum swings back is because of a force which we call gravitation, but what is the force in individualism which thrusts it back under autocratic forms of control?

"I have wondered if the real reason history repeats itself is because man, essentially, is a nonhistoric animal. He feels and is anxious over a present that is too small to demonstrate any change in the historic process. The ordinary man, even in the midst of our present violent social changes, not only feels that his particular social milieu will not change but that it is essentially unchangeable.

"It is not so much indifference toward his personal liberties as it is this brainless feeling of unending security that allows the same historic forces to swing back and forth between liberalism and dictatorships. The pendulum can never be halted at its happiest point in the arc, because nobody believes its position will change while *he* is alive. And under our present American system of not forming families, but living individualistically in hotels, apartment houses and trailers, nobody cares what will happen when he himself is dead."

Mr Barnett listened to this monologue absently at first, then presently not at all. Under the sound of the dean's voice his thoughts drifted back to Miss Lester's gossip about Miss Redeau. He wondered if Miss Redeau really was a questionable woman. If she were, why was she allowed to remain in the university?

Mr Barnett watched for an opportunity, and as Dean Overbrook drew breath between sentences he inquired about Dr Fyke's experiments with Miss Redeau.

The dean immediately sucked this intellectual debris into the current of his disquisition.

"Fyke's attempt to prove that there is no evidence of the persistence of the human individuality after death is all a part of our present historic process toward autocracy. If man survives death, then it would be impossible for the entire values of his life to be bound up in social and economic objectives. That is why Russia is violently anticlerical, why Germany is attempting to re-establish a primitive paganism, and even Rome is tacitly anticlerical. It is the effort to consolidate all values in this one life on earth. The dictators are God's competitors." The dean laughed.

Mr Barnett sat nodding vaguely, but he was still far away from the point in which he was interested.

"Now—uh—going back to—to this medium in Dr Fyke's office, I have wondered—uh—just why they kept her there."

The dean gave the slight frown of a man trying to understand.

"That's the reason, just what I've told you. They are trying to prove with her that the dead do not live beyond the grave."

"No—I—I meant this particular woman. I have heard that—that she is not exactly everything that she might be."

"Oh, that!" ejaculated the dean.

"Yes," nodded Mr Barnett, with a sense of arrival.

"Well—mediums of any sort are not picked up every day—and she does some wonderful things, I can assure you. If it is telepathy it is marvelous telepathy."

Mr Barnett sat with an odd feeling. So it really was true. Miss Lester's report was quite true. He felt depressed. . . . There was something about Miss Reveau . . .

"And I will tell you something else, Mr Barnett, since you do not seem to be so violently materialistic as some of my colleagues," went on the dean. "Our old religious be-

iefs still have a great deal of influence over modern thinking, whether we know it or not."

"Yes, I am sure of that." Mr Barnett nodded absently, with his thoughts still on Miss Redneau.

"And our old religious beliefs welded together morality and spirituality. They made heaven depend upon correct moral action in this world."

"Yes, I know that."

"Well now, whether there really is any connection between morality and the spiritual life is open to question. It was a Jewish device which worked very well indeed, and the other peoples of the earth adopted it more or less. But if there be a spirit world, why should we imagine it to be a realm of justice and mercy, why should it not be as anarchic and full of vice and misery as this world? Our only authority are the myths of the Jews, which are nothing but a handbook written by a people with a moral axe to grind. Perhaps there is a life after death, perhaps it is completely lawless. Spiritistic phenomena seldom follow after any great moral exaltation. Perhaps there is no connection between the two. Perhaps spiritistic apprehension is just a gift to a person, like blue eyes or curly hair."

"That may possibly be," agreed Mr Barnett, who again was uninterested.

"Well now, if the university should dismiss Dr Fyke's medium on a charge of immorality, it might insinuate this idea into some heads where it does not now exist. Of course, it is highly improbable that anybody really would think such a thing. It is a purely academic reason for retaining that sort of a woman. The practical reason, of course, is that the university is not concerned with morals. We are not taking over the work of the Church."

"Yes, but you have just suggested that today there is no Church."

"Oh yes, there is a Church, but it no longer has behind it the sanctions of heaven and hell. It is, you might say, running on the good will it has created in the past."

DEAN OVERBROOK had formed a very excellent opinion of Mr Barnett of Georgia because the latter had listened to his monologue for upward of half an hour. On the strength of this he telephoned President Winneman that he thought the university ought to do something for the Georgian if a way could be devised to do it.

Mr Barnett, on the other hand, was quite impatient with the dean. The old fellow talked too long and too spatteringly. More than that, he had a very blind moral standpoint to be the dean of a great university. Take his attitude toward Miss Redeau. . . . As Mr Barnett walked back home he shook his head and sighed to himself, "Ay, Lord, what moral sacrifices the North would make to advance itself scientifically!"

Mr Barnett's mood continued after he had reached his rooming house. Here his landlady handed him his mail with a righteous air because she had discovered that three of his letters were directed to him in the handwriting of three different women. This fact had dourly pleased the landlady because her only feeling of moral elevation came through some other person's shipwreck.

But Mr Barnett was so perturbed about the North in general and Miss Redeau in particular that he did not observe the good woman's condemnation. He himself saw the three different feminine scripts on his envelopes, all

unknown, and he was provincial enough to wonder, before he opened them, what women could be writing him.

He spent a countryman's usual time in speculating on this point and then opened the first letter. It was from Mrs Clayton LeMoyne Maitland-Jones, corresponding secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Illiteracy in the South. Mrs Maitland-Jones wrote that she had read in the *Megapolis Review* that Mr Barnett was an expert in Southern folklore, and she invited him to come to the society's annual banquet in the Hotel Goldwall and there recite some of his charming folk stories of the South. The other speakers, among whom it would be an honor to appear, Mrs Maitland-Jones stated, were: Aloysius Hunt, distinguished Southern poet; John Hodge Consadine, distinguished Southern historian; Emily Keeton Potts, distinguished Southern columnist; Anson Leech Butterfield, distinguished Southern novelist; and Howard Huntingdon Hughes, distinguished Southern biographer.

Mr Barnett had not heard of any of these celebrities, but being from the South he felt a pride in the exploits of his countrymen.

His next letter was from Mary Stillwell, clerk of the court of Atlee County. Mary was too Southerly reared to write a letter to a married man, but she belonged to the same wing of the Democratic party which had placed Mr Barnett in office, and she enclosed a clipping which she thought her county superintendent ought to see.

It was not an ordinary clipping; it was one of those compound clippings which appear so frequently in Southern papers. The *Atlee Recorder* had reprinted an article from the Columbus *Index*. The *Index* had copied it from the Atlanta *Avalanche*, and the *Avalanche* had taken the article from the University of *Megapolis Review* and had given it the heading, "Georgia Boy Goes Over Big Among Megapolis Highbrows." Each paper had made comments of its own, scathing or complimentary, according to the wing of the Democratic party which it supported. The

Atlee Recorder's caption was, "Oh Yeah!" Its dry comment at the conclusion of the article was:

Mark Anderson says he guesses the *Review* is about right, as practically all Simp Barnett knows is folklore he learned from the niggers.

It was all so complicated that Mr Barnett required time to check off which papers were for him and which against him. He knew that the *Atlee Recorder* was opposed to him during the election because in the middle of the depression he had stopped his subscription to that paper. He had told Slim Goodlow, the editor, that the stringency had caused him to stop his paper, but Slim had replied, how in the hell did he (Andy) think that he (Slim) was going to run his (Slim's) paper if everybody stopped their subscriptions during the stringency? And Slim had fought him politically ever since.

The moral of the whole thing was that he should never have allowed his name to appear in the University of Megapolis *Review*. He realized with chagrin that the South, instead of being illiterate, as Mrs Maitland-Jones's banquet seemed to insinuate, had become so impregnated with literacy that material from the most obscure sources, such as the University of Megapolis *Review*, might at any time turn up in the *Atlee Recorder*.

He drew a long breath at the *faux pas* he had committed in talking to the journalism student and opened his last letter. It was an invitation for him and Miss Lester to come to a party at Mr Philip Medway's home.

This really gave Mr Barnett pause. He wondered who in the world knew him in connection with Miss Lester. Whoever it was should also have known that he was a married man and that it was inappropriate for him to escort a young woman anywhere. . . . Still, of course, they were very lax about such things in the North. He wondered if he had ever mentioned Miss Lester to young Fargason Medway. At any rate he must do something

about it. So he got out of his chair, went across the narrow hallway on the third floor and tapped on Miss Lester's door. He knocked twice before she opened the shutter and appeared in a flowered kimono. She caught a breath and said, "I didn't know that wath you," and drew the gay silk tightly across her chest, recovering her poise and feeling of feminine safety only when the curves of her form were well defined.

"I have an invitation here to a party," began Mr Barnett, disregarding her costume as best he could.

"Yeth, I retheived one, too. I didn't know you knew the Medwayth."

"Oh yes, Fargason Medway and I——"

"Yeth, Fargathon ith the one I know. He tried to get me to join hith club theveral timeth. We got to be quite friendly."

"Oh well, that's how it was," nodded Mr Barnett, in an edified tone, thinking how innocent and enticing Miss Lester's lisp appeared when she wore a kimono. "By the way, I saw Dean Overbrook after I met you this morning."

"Yeth?"

"Yes, he—he gave me much the same—uh—impression about—our mutual acquaintance that you did."

"Oh, you didn't talk to him about that!"

"Well, I was surprised—I mean—you know—that she should stay on here at the university."

"Mithter Barnett, you muthn't exthpect thingth to be here ath they are in my home and in your home," said Miss Lester, with an effect somehow of making her negligee even more dainty and enticing.

"No, no, I don't. I was surprised to hear Dean Overbrook say that the university was not concerned with morals."

"You needn't be surprised at that, either," consoled Miss Lester, loosening her silk envelope a trifle in the safety of their mutual disapproval. "The East is a very imper-

thonal place, Mr Barnett, very imperthonal. You'll find that out. The sad part is that people come here from the South and the West, and unless they watch themselves *very* carefully, they get jutht like them. . . . I'll be ready to go with you at eight, if that will be all right."

"That 'll be fine," agreed Mr Barnett, thinking that it would be a dangerous thing for a pretty woman with a lisp to meet and talk to the ordinary Northern man clad, as Miss Lester was, simply in a kimono.

AT EIGHT O'CLOCK, when Mr Barnett called for Miss Lester, he was esthetically charmed but morally dubious of her appearance. Décolletage was almost nonexistent in Atlee County; and while Mr Barnett had seen pictures of ladies in evening gowns, he had never before beheld one in the flesh.

However, in spite of his little shock of fleshly surprise he appeared quite composed and said that probably he should have worn an evening suit himself, but that he didn't have any.

The woman assured him it made no difference for a man. In the university men wore what they liked. But she had been doubtful about herself. The invitation had not required dress. But she knew it was going to be a big affair or she never would have been invited, so she had dressed.

The fact that they were going to a party somehow placed them under the necessity of maintaining a formal conversation, as if they were strangers to each other.

Miss Lester inquired how he was getting on toward his degree, and Mr Barnett said he hoped the university would do something for him; he didn't know quite what. They might even have gone into a discussion of the midsummer heat, but on the lower floor the landlady inquired in distinctly ironic surprise:

"Going out together for the evening, are ye?"

"We're going to the Medway party," returned Miss

Lester, with an innocence as casual as she could make it.

The two continued in silence until the door was shut and they were out on the stoop; then Miss Lester ejaculated in an undertone:

"That is the most irritating human creature."

"You shouldn't have explained anything," counseled Mr Barnett. "You should have said, 'Yes, we're going out together for the evening.' Just like that."

"I suppose I ought. That woman wouldn't make me so angry if she could really spread her story where it would hurt us. But she can't. That's what makes it so irritating. She doesn't seem to realize her opinion is of absolutely no importance to anybody!"

"Her whole idea is silly, anyway," pointed out Mr Barnett. "If we were—er—what she pretends to think we are, what difference would it make if we did go out together?"

A taxi driver, catching sight of Miss Lester's evening gown, rounded up his cab at the curb, and they both got in.

"Well, no-o, I can't quite say that," qualified the girl. "For us to go out together might make her think that we did know each other quite well before we—you know—took rooms in her house."

"Well, as you say," agreed Mr Barnett, "who could she tell, and what difference does it make what *she* thinks?"

Their cab proved to have a convertible top. The driver got out and lowered this to relieve his fares of the heat and give them a view of the sky and the houses. Cushioned together like this, they entered the uptown traffic under a little isle of murky blue night sky.

The fact that here in Megapolis they really were autonomous moral beings, responsible to no one save their own innate dignity, brought a delicate, intangible pleasure to the newly made friends. Miss Lester felt as protected by this Southerner as if she were a girl again back in her home town in Iowa. Mr Barnett watched the illuminated upper stories of the great apartment buildings move along their strip of sky and felt that here, amid the mystery and

wickedness of a great city, prospered at least one little zone of provincial virtue.

In the midst of their delicate titillation, Miss Lester breathed:

"Oh, look, there's the moon! Here in Megapolis, you have to get in a taxi to thee the moon."

"Where?" asked Mr Barnett, as if he never before had seen the moon.

Miss Lester pointed out a dim crescent amid the overhead glow.

"It's the harveth moon. They're gathering corn back in Iowa now."

The nostalgia in her lisp brought Mr Barnett an impulse to give her a sympathetic pat, and he might have done so had not her shoulders been so smooth and white and inviting.

The taxicab turned off Riverview Avenue, and the weak moon was lost behind them among the roofs and towers.

"Why do you stay here, Miss Lester, if you feel like that?" he asked, tacitly admitting the fact, between themselves, that she would never be cured of her lisp.

It was a very delicate point. Miss Lester had never mentioned it to anyone. Now for Mr Barnett to bring it up in such a grateful Southern fashion was almost as if he had placed an arm about her rather lonely self and comforted her.

"I don't know why I stay here in Megapolith," she admitted, with a certain desolate note in her voice. "I suppose I ought to go back home—but it's so quiet there. Here in Megapolith you never know what will happen to you next—for instance, in Brownlow'th Corner, I would never have met a man like you."

"That your home—Brownlow's Corner?"

"Yeth, that's my home."

Here, of course, Mr Barnett was forced to pay some reciprocal compliment, and he said very honestly as he touched her fingers:

"I never would have met a girl like you in Atlee County, either, Miss Lester—at least not so honestly and sincerely, if you know what I mean."

"There, that's it. That's the very point," agreed Miss Lester at once. "Here in Megapolith you are yourself. If you are a good person, you are just good. If you are a bad person, you are just bad. And I hate to go back to Brownlow'th Corner where nobody is ever quite herself—really nobody knows what she is until she goes away from home where she can do exactly as she pleases and finds out."

As this was merely another way of saying that they were two extraordinarily moral and virtuous persons, there is little telling what conclusion this tête-à-tête would have reached had not their taxicab come to a sudden halt and a violent altercation broken out between their driver and some other drivers.

The other drivers were shouting for their cab to pull into the curb, and their driver was storming for the others to let him through. The next moment there came a banging of stones against their radiator and a smashing of glass in the forward windows.

Miss Lester screamed. Mr Barnett caught her shoulders and bent her down below the level of the open rear seat and crouched down himself. He shouted for the police. Stones continued banging the cab while the drivers cursed and threatened.

Then suddenly the whole street quieted and Mr Barnett heard a policeman demanding of their driver why he was running a taxicab which was in an unsound condition and a danger to traffic.

Their driver began sputtering at the injustice of such a charge, and Mr Barnett and Miss Lester straightened up and began explaining that somebody had stoned the cab.

"Those fellows right there," pointed out Mr Barnett, angrily, "arrest them!"

"Yes, they're the men!" cried the taxi driver. "Run 'em in!"

The policeman shook his head.

"I didn't see anything," he growled at the taxi driver. "From now on you watch where you're driving and get this machine off the street, it's blocking traffic." He came to the side of the car and said privately to Mr Barnett and Miss Lester, "No use running in the strikers for a little thing like this. The mayor is on the side of labor. He's hand in glove with all these popular movements."

The driver turned around in his seat.

"I'm no scab, I've got a union card." He started to reach for it, but found his arm was broken, and tried to fish it out of his pocket with his left hand.

"Then what made 'em beat you up?" demanded the officer.

"Because this is an Italian quarter and some of 'em found out my parents were Spanish."

"You're out of line there, too, brother. The mayor maintains a strict neutrality among foreign disturbances."

. . . Lady, you're cut. Want me to call an ambulance?"

"Where am I cut? Am I bleeding on my dreth?" cried the girl, getting out her wisp of a handkerchief and opening the mirror in her vanity case.

"No, it isn't bleeding much. I think the glass is in the wound," said the policeman, looking at her temple.

"I won't try to get it out. I'm afraid I'd stain my frock. Where's the hothpital?"

"Three blocks east." The officer hailed one of the combative cabmen: "Hey, buddy, take these two to the emergency station of the Medical Memorial, three blocks east of here, where they can be looked after."

The officer then commandeered some of the onlookers and rolled the smashed cab to the curb.

Mr Barnett and the girl changed into another cab.

"The place burns now that I know about it," said Miss Lester, looking sidewise into the mirror of her compact.

Mr Barnett did put an arm about her shoulders to help her sustain the pain.

"Imagine this happening and the officer not doing a thing about it!" he ejaculated, in warm sympathy.

"What happening?" inquired the new driver.

"Why, cutting this lady with glass!" snapped Mr Barnett.

"Nobody intended to cut the lady with glass," stated the driver flatly.

"No matter what they meant, they did cut her with glass!" snapped Mr Barnett.

"And besides," went on the new driver, "what comeback has the lady got, anyway? The mayor can't recognize her—they ain't no ladies' union for her to join."

"I don't suppose I should have been out on the streets at all," cut in Miss Lester.

"You can come out when you please, lady," stated the driver, recognizing the woman's irony, "but if you ain't got no card and don't pay no dues and ain't got somebody to make a demonstration for you if you get cut with glass, the mayor can't recognize you—you come out at your own risk."

By this time they had reached the emergency ward. The two deserted their cold and philosophic driver and went into the waiting room.

Mr Barnett was now concerned to get Miss Lester's wound sterilized as quickly as possible. The girl did not sit down in the chairs in the waiting room, because they would soil her skirt. Mr Barnett went to the head of the line, got the attention of the man at the desk and pointed out Miss Lester. He said that she had only a minor wound and wanted it dressed so she could get away from—

The man at the desk, who up to that point had appeared to be an automaton, suddenly began to laugh.

"Bud, I've heard many a reason why a certain patient should be advanced to the head of the line, but this is the only time I ever heard of a person wanting to come first

because there was nothing the matter with 'em and they had to go."

Such a remark about a beautifully gowned lady angered the Southerner. He snapped out:

"Where is a private physician around here who we can see at once?"

The man at the desk nodded at a telephone booth.

"Look in there, you'll find a red book. Look under the word 'physicians' and you'll find ten pages of 'em. Drop in a nickel before you begin dialing a number."

Such instructions, of course, were pure sarcasm, although as a matter of fact Mr Barnett had never used a dial telephone, and probably would get mixed up a time or two at the beginning. The Georgian, however, turned and walked back to Miss Lester.

"Come on, let's go to a private physician," he snapped.

"No, let's don't do that. I don't mind standing. I'm watching my cut. It won't bleed on my dress."

"It isn't your dress, it's the way they treat a lady in this da—" Here for some reason he broke off abruptly and ran out the door of the waiting room. He was gone three or four minutes when he reappeared, accompanied by a genial, heavy-bodied, dynamic man.

"Miss Lester," he began, with the glow of those who introduce the great, "allow me to present Dr Fyke. I just saw him passing the door outside. He will show us where you can be attended to at once."

"Dr Fyke!" cried Miss Lester. "You are not Dr Myron Fyke who writes all the best sellers?"

"Not all of them," acknowledged the Doctor, smiling. "One now and then, possibly."

"Dr Fyke was just going home from the mental ward," explained Mr Barnett.

"Not home," corrected the Doctor, "—to Psychology Hall. Come on, I jagged my hand a while ago. I'll have it sterilized while you get your head bandaged."

Miss Lester had forgot her head in the presence of Dr

Fyke. She kept glancing at him from different angles and recognizing the various pictures of him which she had seen in the newspapers. He was not quite so academic or so handsome as his book advertisements depicted him, but nevertheless he was academic and handsome.

"What sort of work are you doing in the mental ward?" inquired the girl.

"Tracing the causes of nervous breakdowns. I'm compiling a book on *How Sane Are You?* It gives the diet, the minimum rest and quiet one must have to maintain a nervous equilibrium. It is very interesting," went on the Doctor, automatically attempting to sell the girl his prospective book, "to observe the phases of the decline in judgment through lack of food, rest and quiet. The first thing affected is the patient's ability to form a new theory about known facts."

"How interesting!" ejaculated Miss Lester.

"Then when the patient becomes a little more tired, he loses his ability to reproduce facts and theories already known to him."

Miss Lester did not want to repeat her phrase, "How interesting!" but she nodded in a manner that repeated its meaning as the three left the emergency ward.

"Finally the patient tends to accept the simplest solution for any given problem, the one that requires the least mental exertion—and do you know what I deduce from that?"

"Why, no," breathed Miss Lester, expecting a miracle.

"Our wars," stated the Doctor, with finality. "In our great international crises war is declared, not by councils after mature deliberation, but by councils whose ability to deliberate has been exhausted."

"What an extraordinary idea!" cried the girl.

Dr Fyke nodded.

"Yes, war councils are naturally conducted at fever heat. The surplus energy available for deliberative purposes is rapidly exhausted. The different stages of decre-

ment are reached just as in ordinary patients: first an inability to devise new ways and means of peace, then an inability to correlate old and customary means, finally a sharp mental slump where the patient is open to suggestion and adopts the easiest mental solution for his dilemma—and of course that easiest mental solution in diplomatic controversies is war. And there is always the tremendous suggestion toward war by either the people or the press. And, please understand, both the people and the press and the radio are within themselves vaguely organized deliberative bodies whose energies slump through the same phases and emerge at last offering the same simple brute solution of war when the maintenance of peace becomes too complicated."

"Well, that is the most amazing theory I ever heard come out of a mental ward!" cried Miss Lester.

"Madam, what could be more natural than that the psychology of war and strikes should be most simply illustrated in a mental ward?"

"I suppose that would be true," agreed the woman.

"When nations become even approximately civilized," went on the Doctor, "boards for the settlement of strikes and diplomatic councils for the amicable arrangement of international disputes will be divided into shifts. One shift will sleep, one shift will play golf, one shift will attend some musical concert, another a theater, and one shift will meet for perhaps a two-hour session to discuss the means of averting war. They will jot down their findings, and at the end of two hours another shift will take their places and continue their investigations. Wars will then cease because war councils would never become so nervously exhausted that they would declare war."

"That does sound reasonable, doesn't it?" nodded Miss Lester, in wondering admiration.

"Entirely reasonable," agreed the Doctor. "That's probably why it will never be tried. It would mean that an excited, bloodthirsty humanity would deliberately iso-

late a part of itself to maintain poise and judgment and inventiveness, and that is something the great body of humanity would never tolerate."

Here Dr Fyke conducted his guests into a small medical dispensary where he had his own hand dressed and Miss Lester's temple covered with a small flesh-colored strip of plaster.

As the Doctor was going to his laboratory in Psychology Building, he suggested that, since Miss Lester was so interested and Mr Barnett was one of his own students, the two go with him. Mr Barnett demurred on account of the Medway party, but it turned out that the Doctor himself was going to the Medway party after his work in the laboratory. So the three got into the Doctor's car at the hospital entrance and started back to the university grounds.

Dr Myron Fyke was one of those endless theorists whose flood of ideas eventually benumbed the brains of his listeners.

As the chauffeur drove the trio back to the university, the Doctor returned to his theme of the nervous instability of the American people and correlated it with the American concentration on money. He said that ever since man's advent on earth, man had been accustomed to collecting concrete objects of satisfaction. But he pointed out that money was not a concrete object of satisfaction, it was an abstract of possible satisfactions. Therefore, when men began to accumulate money as an end within itself, it lost the satisfaction value which is produced by an accumulation of concrete material property. It directed its possessor's imagination into the future and forced him to choose, among all possible pleasures, which pleasure he preferred. No other form of property places man in this state of mental indecision, and that is why the possession of money *qua* money and the pursuit of money *qua* money lead to nervous instability.

It required the Doctor at least thirty minutes to string

out this theory and illustrate it with many examples, any one of which was interesting enough in itself, but, hung together like that, they became painfully tedious.

The monologue filled poor Miss Lester with qualms about her own intelligence. Here was a brilliant, famous author talking and swiftly putting her to sleep. She blinked her eyes in the dimly lighted car and wondered if she really was obtuse.

There was another phase of this money business—the law of diminishing returns of satisfaction in the accumulation of money—and Miss Lester knew if Dr Fyke went on with that she might easily fall into the disgrace of nodding, or even snoring. In order to break the deadening spell of his flow of words, she seized on one of his brief pauses. With as deceptive an effect of bright and continued interest as she could produce, she inquired what they were going to see at the laboratory.

"A séance—a spiritualistic séance," said the Doctor, just as informed and enthusiastic over this topic as he had been about money.

Miss Lester uttered a little ejaculation and drew an intake of breath at this information.

Dr Fyke picked on this at once.

"Feel a bit squeamish about it, eh?" he inquired, with a touch of amusement.

Miss Lester admitted that she did.

"Well, when you feel squeamish and don't quite know why, always look to history," laughed the Doctor.

"History?" queried the girl.

"Yes. It's a theory of mine that your shudder is a tribute to the thoroughness of the ecclesiastical organization of Rome."

"I don't see how that could be," said Miss Lester, with some curiosity.

"Well, you see it's like this. The early Church was founded on mediums and clairvoyants and miracle workers of all kinds. Wandering practitioners of these arts visited

the different congregations and naturally wielded considerable power. But when the churches were organized by Rome, the bishops were jealous of this power, so they issued an edict that only the bishops should work miracles and interview the spirits of the departed and that the works of all wandering soothsayers were of the devil.

"As a matter of practice, of course, the bishops possessed no supernormal powers and were completely unable to work miracles, so gradually any manifestation of these powers, upon which the Christian Church was built, was attributed to the Evil One. For the same reason the whole field of supernormal psychological investigation was banned by the Roman interdiction. The taint of diabolism carried over from Rome, through the Reformation, into the Protestant churches. The result is that this field of psychology is still almost completely undeveloped in our Western world. So the fact that you shivered just then at the thought of a séance is a tribute to the thorough-going organization of the early Roman Church." Dr Fyke laughed again, just audibly in the half-light of the car.

Miss Lester sat pondering what he said—with a new access of interest because it related in a remote fashion to a certain phase of her own family life in Iowa. At last she asked uncertainly:

"Well, Dr Fyke, does that—does that have any bearing on the factual truth of spiritualism?"

"None at all. Of course the medieval mind would interpret all supernormal phenomena as the work of external powers—spirits, gods, what not. But when Rome branded all the available spirits as evil spirits, it banned those very supernormal phenomena upon which all primitive religions have been founded. So Rome destroyed its own foundation and catapulted into the Reformation. The Protestant churches continued the same ban and slid into the materialism of the modern world."

"But you say that doesn't show anything about the truth of spiritism?" persisted the girl, shaking her head.

"No. If spiritistic research could have continued unrestricted, no doubt the natural curiosity of man, in the form of science, finally would have demonstrated that all spiritistic phenomena are the result of the functioning of the subconscious mind. Also our Western world would not have confined its mental activities so completely to mechanics. We would have had fewer flying machines and less powerful bombs and would have known better how to handle them." Here Dr Fyke opened the glass partition and spoke to his chauffeur:

"Oh, Harry, make a note of this, will you, and when we reach the laboratory give it to Miss Moe and tell her it will come up in my tickler six months from now."

"Yes, sir. And what is the note, Doctor?"

"The Debt You Owe as a Materialist to Organized Religion."

When the car stopped under the next red light, Miss Lester could see the chauffeur writing the title on his cuff.

WHEN DR FYKE EXPRESSED these casual opinions on the way to the laboratory, he set Mr Barnett a trifle ill at ease. The Southerner felt that a man ought to speak with more reverence on religious and semireligious themes. Not only that, but there was a certain vague danger in irreverence. The Bible warned men against "idle talk," and Mr Barnett obeyed this injunction. He himself had no particular belief in religion, but he always spoke reverently of the Deity on the ground that if there were a God, he would be safe, and if there were no God he would be out nothing. He personally would not accept the risk Dr Fyke was taking, because some little thing could happen to a man so easily, and—puff!—he'd be gone—and who could say positively that God had not removed him for some irreverence?

Miss Lester, on the other hand, who had a much more concrete belief than Mr Barnett, was very pleased with Dr Fyke's historical analysis. It almost relieved her of a certain vague repressive influence that had beset her all of her life. It was not at all an adverse influence; really she supposed it made always for her betterment, but—it was always there, and Dr Fyke's rationalism eased her in some small degree from her intangible moral stricture.

When the three reached Psychology Hall they found a small crowd gathered in the laboratory for the séance. The group was talking of this and that—a play just staged in

the dramatic workshop; who would win the Bosworth prize; a girl was discussing football with Chekolokovsky. Sight of the big Russian youth reminded Mr Barnett of Miss Redneau, but the Southerner's growing interest in Miss Lester had eased away much of his distress over the French girl's compromised position. Such women existed. It was unfortunate, but the facts had to be faced.

He was still thinking this comforting saw when the lights in the laboratory were dimmed, an inner door opened and Dr Fyke and Miss Redneau advanced toward a table and a chair, set off from the group of spectators, on a little stage. The appearance of the French girl sent a brush of renewed and almost painful interest over Mr Barnett. She wore a loose white silk robe, and her dark hair was unbound, with one long heavy strand falling over her shoulder and arm and accentuating the whiteness of her gown and face.

"Ladies and gentlemen," began Dr Fyke in a low voice, "you see before you probably the beginning of all religious ceremonial. Soothsayers, clairvoyants, mystics, so-called spiritistic mediums have always adopted some loose garment in order that they might become as entirely free from bodily sensations as possible in their work. This is the far-away origin of priestly robes which are still worn but which long since have dropped their physical function. They have been retained for their acquired solemnity. This, also, no doubt, is the root of the primitive belief that the angels wear robes, and is responsible for the angelic costumes in all religious painting—the root of it all is that mediums do not want to be conscious of their clothes."

"The glass ball which I place on the table in front of Miss Redneau, in order to assist her in concentrating her subconscious mind, also has its counterpart in religious ceremonial and in art. It represents, in its beneficent aspect, the bells, candles and long monotonous prayers of the priests. In its malevolent aspect it represents the charms, incantations, spells and fetishes of the devil. But

in all of its aspects it is nothing more than a device to assist the adept in passing across the threshold of the conscious into the subconscious. There is nothing mystical about any of this, but it is mysterious because at present we do not fully understand its psychological mechanism.

"This evening we will undoubtedly receive the visitation of spirits, spooks and what not. It will be our endeavor to show you in each case that the knowledge possessed by the medium is also possessed by some other living mind, and therefore in interpreting any phenomena that may appear before us we will use the rule of simplicity and greatest probability. By that I mean any results we may produce we will attribute to clairvoyance, clairaudience and telepathy, if that interpretation be possible. If not, then we will attribute it frankly to spiritistic communication. All right, Mr Eldo, will you sit over there by the telephone and reference library?"

The secretary moved his seat over to a table containing a telephone and a number of large books. The whole room became completely silent.

Dr Fyke came over softly and sat down in a chair near Mr Barnett and Miss Lester. Even here he began explaining in a low tone:

"There is possibly still another modern derivative of the robe of the ancient wonder maker, that is the bride's wedding gown. There is no doubt an intimate connection between psychic phenomena and the moment of reproduction. Before animal life on earth had eyes or ears or olfactory organs, male and female must have been guided toward each other by instinct. But unfortunately the term 'instinct' is a *vacua verba*. If we substitute a term with a more nearly definite meaning, we must say they were attracted to each other psychically, telepathically. There is, no doubt, a powerful subconscious connection between the two principals in all phases of reproduction."

A heavy voice behind Mr Barnett inquired in a low tone:

"Dr Fyke, is that why the Arabs veil their women—they are such a sensual race?"

Mr Barnett glanced around and was moved with distaste that Chekolokovsky should bring up such a subject as that in the presence of the sleeping and transfigured French girl. Here the Georgian's thoughts were interrupted by a movement and a sound from the girl herself.

Both Mr Barnett and Miss Lester leaned forward curiously. Neither had ever attended a séance before, but they had an idea of what would happen. But because Miss Lester did have some advance knowledge of how the medium would sigh and moan, she became sure that the French girl was imitating a real séance and that the whole performance was fraudulent. She turned to Mr Barnett and asked skeptically what he thought of it. She had difficulty in getting Mr Barnett's attention, but when she did he lifted a hand and whispered:

"It must be genuine—it's just like the descriptions I've read. Listen to her—she's saying something."

The moans of the medium had indeed given place to mumbled, disconnected words:

"Tell Beulah . . . bury today . . . not bury . . ."

Miss Lester looked at Mr Barnett for some sympathy in her skepticism of such patent dissimulation. Mr Barnett, however, was wrapped in the mystery, and in that merging of spiritual and physical beauty which the great painters of Europe have woven about the figure of the robed Madonna.

Dr Fyke spoke to the girl in his monotone:

"What is it you want Beulah told—bury today?"

"No . . . no . . . not bury today . . . not bury me today," begged the medium, in a tone of great feeling.

Dr Fyke made a gesture for his secretary, Miss Moe, to record this conversation. He said to Miss Redeau again:

"You want Beulah told not to bury you today?"

"No . . . not today."

"You are dead?"

"Yes . . . I am dead . . ." and Miss Redeau began weeping outright.

Miss Lester shook her head slightly at such transparency. A grue ran down Mr Barnett's back at the ghostly transposition of the French girl into some soul newly dead.

"When did you die?" proceeded Dr Fyke, in the even monotone of an accustomed investigator.

"I . . . I don't know. . . . This morning."

"And Beulah—who is Beulah?"

"My wife."

"And your own name—what is your name?"

"Henry."

"Yes, Henry. Henry who—what is your last name?"

After this unemotional question there was a silence during which Miss Redeau apparently slept.

"Spell it," suggested Dr Fyke.

The medium's face became worried and she began spelling slowly:

"S-e-n-m-o-r-e."

"Henry Senmore," pronounced Dr Fyke.

"Yes," whispered Miss Redeau, as if very weary, "Henry Senmore."

Dr Fyke then said in an aside to his auditors:

"It's an odd thing about surnames. Mediums always have trouble getting surnames. It is possible to construe this as an evidence of the soul's persistence after death. Surnames are recent inventions. Perhaps the ego still identifies itself with its first name and still relegates the surname as a mere place name, an identification of the first name. When connections with the earth life dropped away, then its identifying tag in the earth life, the surname, would also drop away and be recalled by an effort. I do not advance this even as a hypothesis, but merely call your attention to it in passing." He turned to Miss Redeau again: "Henry Senmore, where did you live when you were alive?"

"Wan . . . Wan . . . Wansumsett." The medium sighed amid her hesitations.

"And the state?"

"Massachusetts," she answered more readily.

"And now the street—can you give the street address?" inquired the Doctor as he made a gesture toward Mr Eldo at the table.

Came a long silence. The lecturer repeated his request, and the medium finally said:

"The address . . . is . . . Eighteen . . . East Aurora."

Dr Fyke turned to Mr Eldo at the table:

"Get the telephone directory of Wansumsett, Massachusetts, check Henry Senmore's street address." He turned to the medium again: "Is that all you want to say —tell your wife Beulah not to bury you today?"

Miss Redneau began weeping again.

"Yes . . . tell her that."

"What did you find, Leonard?" asked the Doctor of his secretary at the table.

"There is no Henry Senmore listed. There is a Dr Marvin Senmore on 14 Bay Street, Wansumsett."

"Take this message to Dr Senmore: 'This evening received purported spiritistic message from Henry Senmore 18 East Aurora Street quote Tell Beulah not to bury me today unquote Information concerning Beulah and Henry Senmore their present circumstances appreciated signed Myron Fyke Megapolis University.'"

Sending this message gave a queer effect of ghostly reality to the séance. Up to this point, to Mr Barnett it had seemed not solid enough to call for the use of a telegram. The Georgian felt that the telegram would be like flinging a stone against a bubble. But for a Dr Marvin Senmore to exist in an actual town called Wansumsett was amazing.

Miss Lester whispered in his ear:

"She had looked in the directory—you know that."

"Then why didn't she pick on Dr Marvin Senmore himself—and get the right street address?"

"Oh—to seem mysterious."

The two stopped whispering as Dr Fyke continued his lecture in an undertone:

"No doubt sensitive clairvoyants have received such messages as these since man appeared on earth. They have usually been messages conveyed under the stress of great emotion; most of them concern death. Therefore it was only natural for the old Greeks to conceive of the hereafter as a gloomy, dismal land which lay across the dark river Styx. It is natural that the future life as conceived in Scandinavian countries should be a perpetual battle-field, with the dead arising to fight again, as their magicians and mediums no doubt received messages purporting to come from their warriors slain in battle. The phenomenon of mediumship, taken with the customs of a people, explains with more or less precision the religion of that people. But—here is an interesting point—the old Hebrews, out of these dolorous messages such as you have just heard, evolved a religion of joy and hope and gladness. That is an interesting variation, ladies and gentlemen, and it might possibly suggest that a wider psychological field lay beyond death than the mere weeping at its gate. This one fact, that a people existed who perceived joy beyond our physical death, is a suggestion that there actually does exist a realm, far beyond physical dissolution, where joy exists. However, I am calling this to your attention merely as a suggestion, not as a scientific theory."

At that moment the telephone gave a subdued buzz. Mr Eldo answered it and began talking:

"Yes. . . . This is Dr Fyke's office. . . . You may give me the message. . . . 'Brother Henry Senmore died 9:10 A.M. home 18 East Aurora Street. Wife Beulah Senmore. Do not understand request not to be buried today although fog and rain. Marvin Senmore M.D.' "

The silence in the laboratory was broken by Miss Moe sitting down at the typewriter and beginning to transcribe the notes she had taken. It was a part of the night's routine with her.

Mr Barnett could hardly credit what he had heard.

"Why, it's real," he whispered to Miss Lester, completely amazed himself. He had accepted the séance as a kind of dramatic reality, such as one finds in the theater, but now the receipt of the telegram had given the whole performance, to him, an unequivocal truthfulness. And still he could not credit such an idea. He appealed to the lecturer for relief from this breath of immortality that suddenly assailed his soul:

"You don't mean, Dr Fyke, that the dead man, Henry Senmore, actually was here in this laboratory talking to you?"

Dr Fyke smiled and shook his head:

"Certainly not. I hope you won't take away any such idea as—"

"Then how do you explain—"

"My explanation, Mr Barnett, is that the message we received is precisely the sort of message that some living person would *feel*, not send."

"Feel and not send?"

"Yes, the sending is an accident. The person who would feel the most horror at having Henry Senmore buried in the sleet and rain would be Beulah Senmore, his wife. She would have authority over the time of the burial. She did not want her husband buried in the muddy earth, but that desire to delay his funeral was suppressed, no doubt, through custom and simple good sense. But it did fill her subconscious mind with repulsion. It was this emotion in Beulah Senmore's subconscious mind that Miss Redeau received and dramatized as a message coming from Henry Senmore requesting Beulah not to permit his burial in the rain.

"The subconscious always functions in dramatic form

as if its thoughts were external to itself. In our dreams, our desires and fears are always acted out upon the stage of our imagination. The primitive mind always invents *dramatis personae* for subjective impressions. That is why there exists among uncivilized people a belief in a deity. God is the dramatic externalization of man's need and hope of help."

To this Mr Barnett nodded slightly. And although the nod was very slight, it was, in point of fact, a very complicated nod. It was a nod in which Mr Barnett meant that he understood what Dr Fyke had said but that he did not agree with his dictum. And the Southerner hoped in his heart that the Supernal Powers, if there were any, would gather precisely what was included and what was excluded by the nod. His inclusion was a simple understanding of what Fyke's theory meant; his exclusions were both the truthfulness and the casual irreverence in which the scientist had framed his theory.

The very recent visitation of Mr Henry Senmore's disembodied spirit to the psychological laboratory stressed, quite strongly, Mr Andrew Barnett's insistence to the gods on these two points.

ALL THIS FAINT APPREHENSION which Mr Barnett felt for Dr Fyke's skepticism was quite hidden beneath the surface of the Georgian's conduct. Outwardly he was smiling and talking as the group in the laboratory broke up.

Miss Redeau had come out of her trance and had retired into the anteroom to put on her street clothes. Chekolokovsky, his hands on the back of a chair, stood with the awkward look of a man too large for his surroundings. Evidently he was waiting for Miss Redeau.

Mr Barnett disregarded for the moment what he had found out concerning the character of the French girl and felt a renewed touch of resentment that such a block of beef should be allowed to escort a woman of such sensitivity as Miss Redeau must possess.

It appeared that the whole group was going to the Medway party. Dr Fyke invited Mr Barnett, Miss Lester and two of his secretaries to go in his car. For a moment Mr Barnett held a pleasant anticipation of riding in the car with the French girl, but it appeared that she had to go by her apartment to change her dress for an evening frock, and Chekolokovsky took her off in a cab.

Outside of the building some of the men students filled up the car. As they started, Dr Fyke inquired about the wound in Miss Lester's temple. The girl came out of some personal meditation to say that she had forgot all about her wound.

"There you are again, mind over matter," nodded the Doctor. "The séance was a great example, your cured temple a small one. There is a continuous suggestion that the object of all life is a more and more complete control of spirit over matter."

"Then do you think we are all headed toward being spiritistic mediums like Miss Redeau?" inquired Mr Barnett, who found a satisfaction in mentioning Miss Redeau's name.

"No, quite the contrary. I think we are receding from the capability of direct spiritual control of matter. I believe Miss Redeau's performance is a vestigial ability, not a developing ability. I am sure what we call primitive peoples possess it to a far greater degree than we do."

"But that doesn't agree with your thesis that life is a more complete control of spirit over matter—that is, if we agree to your hypothesis of duality, which I do not," put in Mr Eldo.

"Let's not discuss duality and I'll defend myself," said Fyke. "Life is a more complete control of spirit over matter, but spirit always takes the easiest and simplest modes of control. The easiest and simplest mode in our phase of civilization is through the machine. We build machines to serve our needs instead of forcing matter to obey the bald fiat of our psyche. The result is that human development has fallen into the same cul de sac which insect development fell into upon the development of instinct. An insect which is perfectly ministered to by instinct has no need of reason. A man who is perfectly ministered to by machines has no need of supernormal psychical powers. That is why I am sure that Miss Redeau's ability is vestigial and not crescent. She is the gleanings of a past harvest."

Miss Lester, who felt simultaneously very flattered at being admitted to any such abstract conversation and very much bored and at sea listening to it, seized on a pause in the Doctor's conversation to ask him how many languages he spoke.

The Doctor knew the American belief that the number of languages a man spoke was a criterion of his learning. He said that he himself spoke five languages passably, but that his chauffeur spoke eighteen.

"And in America," he added, "the qualities of the servant inhere in some degree in the master, so I think you ought to give me credit for at least half of my chauffeur's languages, which would make me the master of—let me see—five and nine—fourteen languages."

Mr Barnett was annoyed at this light turn to the talk. He was from the South, a section of the country which has the odd quality of being morally and religiously in earnest, whereas the North and the West are financially and mechanically in earnest. And a glimmer had just passed through Mr Barnett's mind that if increasing spiritual control over matter was the trend of life, could not the final objective be the complete freedom of spirit from matter, or immortality? The Georgian naturally had no idea of how many gins, traps and elenchi his logic would tumble into before he reached that conclusion.

The discussion never came off, anyway, because Dr Fyke was explaining to Miss Lester in a low tone that his chauffeur was a doctor of philosophy, a boy who had worked his way through the university at all manner of odd jobs and who had majored in ancient Semitic languages. "His name is Bell," continued the Doctor, in an undertone so Bell would not hear him, "and since Adak Rakouf left the university I suppose Bell is the only man in residence who can translate a Hittite inscription."

"Well, why is he—chauffeuring?" inquired Miss Lester delicately.

"He's sticking around, hoping for a berth on the university's archaeological staff in Mesopotamia. This staff will be increased after our laboratories in magnetology, genetics, dietetics and embryology have been expanded and more modernly equipped." The Doctor dropped his voice still lower: "Of course now, by tradition, Bell ought

to be on his way toward making a great financial success and endowing the university with millions. That is, you might say, the type case of the poor student who works his way through the university at odd jobs, but unfortunately Bell, who really has a very brilliant mind, majored in Hittite instead of corporation law."

Mr Barnett did not know how to take this. He was not sure whether Dr Fyke was humorous or sympathetic or a little of both. He changed the subject by inquiring if Dr Fyke had looked over his new arrangement of the material on superstition.

"Oh, that," remembered Dr Fyke. "Yes, I looked it over—ah—"

"Did it seem to be arranged all right this time?" interrupted Mr Barnett.

"As I was about to remark," continued the Doctor, "what we call logic is, after all, that mental sequence which seems most natural to us. Logic is merely a topical groove down which our minds slide easily."

Mr Barnett began nodding slowly and dubiously, because this preface did not sound as if Dr Fyke thoroughly approved of the order in which he had arranged the clippings on superstition.

"The groove best adapted to your mind is not necessarily the groove best adapted to mine," went on the psychologist.

"So you don't think my third arrangement will do, either?" observed Mr Barnett, with foreboding.

"Well—I don't believe it would be a popular arrangement. I don't believe many persons would feel that the book flowed—you understand what I mean—if I dictate it as you have arranged it."

Mr Barnett's mind moved here and there, seeking some way out of his dilemma.

"By the way," he proposed dubiously, "could I get credit on my certificate or diploma or voucher, or what-

ever it is I'm to receive, if I could ring in somebody to help me arrange that stuff?"

Miss Moe smiled:

"The university issues thousands of degrees every year on just those premises, Mr Barnett, only they are usually not stated in advance."

Mr Eldo interposed:

"Now wait, Mr Barnett's idea is not so educationally unorthodox as it sounds. Remember he is working toward a degree to take his place as superintendent of schools. His job will be to select men who can perform successfully certain lines of work. Now if he can select somebody here in the university who can successfully arrange that material on superstition, don't you see he will be developing a skill in the direct line of his duty and not in a mere correlated branch, as it would be if he arranged the material himself?"

"That's true," agreed Miss Moe. "That's why the university turns out so many great business executives; the boys use so many ghost writers in their examinations."

"Whom did you have in mind to help you, Mr Barnett?" inquired Dr Fyke, disregarding this badinage.

"I thought I might get Professor Stahl," said the Georgian.

"Stahl!" ejaculated Dr Fyke in surprise.

"Stahl isn't a professor, he's an assistant professor," corrected Mr Eldo.

"I thought perhaps I'd see him at the party this evening," said Mr Barnett.

"No, you won't," said Miss Moe. "The wives of assistant professors don't go out very much, for very good reasons, and Mr Stahl won't go out without his wife, which I think is very decent of him."

"It's very bad policy," said Mr Eldo.

"Any number of decencies are very bad policy in Megapolis," retorted Miss Moe.

"Now look here," said Mr Eldo, "everyone understands

that the salaries of assistant professors are small, but one also understands that a college career is the modern counterpart of a novitiate in the medieval monasteries. It demands the same austerity and renunciation of the world, and also the same catholicism, if you understand what I mean."

"I don't," snapped Miss Moe, who apparently had had some unhappy experience with assistant professors.

"I mean the university scientist cannot concentrate his efforts on experiments leading toward commercial possibilities," explained Mr Eldo. "In these modern times that is an austerity quite the equivalent of the hair shirt and the scourge."

"If it is the equivalent of torture," put in one of the other students, "then the man isn't a real scientist. To a real scientist the accumulation of money cannot compare with advancement in his particular line of research. Money is made by everybody; it is the most ordinary of achievements; but the smallest real addition to scientific knowledge is unique. It places the discoverer on a pinnacle completely his own among all the billions who have ever lived."

"Even that is no worthy motive for a university scientist," said Dr Fyke. "He should not seek personal distinction, but the advancement of knowledge."

"How many editions did your last book sell, Dr Fyke?" inquired Miss Moe, who apparently tried to make herself as acidulous as possible in all directions.

Her question was sidetracked by Mr Eldo, saying:

"Look, there is Prexy's car in front of the Medway home!"

Everyone became more alert.

"I will make an opportunity to introduce you to the president, Mr Barnett," said Dr Fyke. "I would like him to understand your peculiar necessities here in the university. . . . And speaking of the material you have of mine, I think if Mr Stahl would assist you in your arrangement, that would be satisfactory to me."

THE MEDWAY HOME WAS A large, flat-faced brick structure which gave the impression, presented by so many wealthy homes in Megapolis, of aiming deliberately at a kind of expensive bleakness.

When Dr Fyke's group entered the door, they found the reception line already broken up and dispersed, and crowds of people pushed slowly among themselves in all directions. One of the foci of this movement was President Winneman. Strings of persons gravitated toward him, and other strings flowed away from him. Dr Fyke signaled Mr Barnett. The two men were entering an in-going string when a hand caught Mr Barnett's arm. The Georgian looked around and saw a young man whose identity eluded him.

"Don't remember me?" said the youth. "I'm the man who got you in here—you know—articles in the *Review* and the *Mimic*."

Mr Barnett suddenly recognized the student of journalism who had walked with him down the steps of Psychology Hall.

"Oh—yes, yes, I remember, especially the one in the *Mimic*."

"Oh, the *Mimic* was nothing—study in humor. *Review* article went over big—copied by twelve papers, one out in California. Send you one if you want to file it."

"I'll get along all right, but thanks just the same."

"Anyway, it was a pretty smooth article. What d'ye think of this jam, make sense to you?"

Mr Barnett shook his head after the disappearing young man. The two were in lines that were passing each other. A moment later Mr Barnett lost sight of the journalist when Dr Fyke took his arm to present him to President Winneman.

"This is the Mr Barnett Dean Overbrook spoke to you about—doing such interesting educational work in Georgia."

"Very fine," acknowledged the president. "Dean Overbrook spoke to me about you. Glad to place good men in the South."

That was all there was to it. The two were now past the president, and others behind Mr Barnett were being presented.

"You don't think he'll remember just that?" said the Georgian, in a disappointed tone.

"Oh yes, yes," assured Dr Fyke. "You had quite a conversation with him. He has a wonderful memory—wonderful old man—nothing like personal contact." The Doctor looked around for another profitable contact for his protégé. "See that woman in green?—no, not that one; the third woman in green from the one you're looking at—she's talking to a medium-sized, sad-faced man. Well, that's Nisson."

"The third woman in green?"

"No, the man she's talking to. . . . You've heard of Nisson?"

Mr Barnett had not, but he saw that he should have heard, so he said:

"Oh, certainly. Nisson . . . let me see . . . what does he do?"

"Economist. Nisson has been called to Washington for consultation. You ought to meet him—might be a very good thing to know him."

Mr Barnett picked out the medium-sized, sad-faced man.

"Yes, I'd like to. . . . I wonder if Miss Redeau and Knollichucky have got here yet?"

"Knollichucky?"

"I mean Chekolokovsky. I always call him Knollichucky."

Dr Fyke was not interested in his medium outside of the laboratory.

"I imagine they're here by now. . . . Come here, here's a short person we can see over—we probably won't get to him after all."

Nisson was saying:

"Now in England any historic house or national shrine is not taken away from the owner, but he cannot make any changes in it or allow it to fall into disrepair, and upon his death it goes to the British government and becomes public property."

"What does that illustrate?" inquired the woman in green, who seemed to be a sort of interlocutor.

"The extension of the principle of eminent domain on historic and esthetic premises."

"But that doesn't include personnel, labor and thought," pointed out the woman.

"Labor today is doing the curious thing of solidifying its membership under erratic and unpredictable leaders. It is becoming a bomb in a huge cannon to be fired by anybody. If the government does not consciously take over labor, labor will become the government, then there will be a shift in the American attitude from the mores of the middle class to the mores of labor. We will have a labor dictatorship, just as at present we have a mixed dictatorship, a plutocratic bourgeois combination. The bourgeois end, which once controlled manners and morals and to some extent commercial relations, is being squeezed out, or perhaps I should say has been squeezed out. There has never been any essential difference between the manners

and morals of labor and wealth. Both act on the principle of unrestraint, because one has nothing to lose, and the other has so much that loss is immaterial. The middle man with a small stake is the moralist and the religiast. He realizes the precariousness of his position. He guards his personal conduct to prevent any financial loss and prays God to help him retain and increase what he has."

Laughter broke out in the circle around the economist.

"What becomes of the democratic idea?" inquired the woman in green.

"It only functions within one given class. The very derivation of the word gives you the idea—*demos*—the people. But who are the people? They are the group who rule. Russia has a labor democracy. What does that mean? That the produce of the Russian people inhere to the benefit of laborers? Not at all. It means merely that the manners and mores of laborers are the spiritual basis of Russian ideology. Therefore Russia does extravagant and unrestrained deeds. She sends planes over the North Pole, she liquidates whole companies of her generals, she brackets the energy and lives of men with the energy and lives of machines, and uses them for her purposes indifferently. That has always been the attitude of labor. Man himself is a commodity and is of no value beyond his direct-use value."

"Then how do you explain our great American state paper?" inquired the woman in green, a little nettled—"We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men are born free and equal?"

"The Declaration of Independence was written," explained Dr Nisson, "when America was falling completely in possession of one group of men, the middle class. The Negro had been enslaved; the Indian, murdered. Therefore all that was left in America at that historic moment were a group of men who could look about and honestly and sincerely say to each other, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, all men were born free and equal and have

equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.' And by way of stressing their point they immediately drove the wealthy loyalist class into Canada and confiscated their lands. That was a detail in their own pursuit of happiness."

Polite laughter broke out at this. Mr Barnett was not greatly interested in Dr Nisson and took advantage of the mirth to slip out of the group in search of Miss Redeau. As he struggled through the crowd he came upon Miss Lester. An apprehension went through him that he would have to stop and talk to her. And she did lisp out to him that something or other was shameful. When Mr Barnett inquired into the cause of her excitement, he found that she had heard someone talking about the scientists in the university laboratories. Any inventions they produced went to the university.

"Well now, who do you know who has invented anything?" inquired the Georgian.

"Mr Derekthon wath telling me about it," said the girl.

"Oh yes, Derekson. Well now, I'll go and do something about that right now," said Mr Barnett, seizing this pale excuse to move away from Miss Lester.

A Japanese servant came pushing through the crowd with a tray of cocktails. Mr Barnett took one and asked the Oriental where he could find Miss Redeau. The little yellow man pointed upstairs and said, "To the reft," meaning "left."

Mr Barnett took another glass from the tray and worked his way up the steps, under an impression which he somehow had formed that he would find Miss Redeau alone.

The second story of the Medway home was not so brilliantly lighted as the first floor, and in this subdued light Mr Barnett saw a small group seated by a window. He went over and stood just outside the embrasure, questioning, a little uncertainly, why he had come. His two cocktails were not as gracefully introductory as he had thought

they would be. In fact they were a little conspicuous. To add to the slight awkwardness of the situation, the little party were conversing in French, a language which Mr Barnett did not understand. Presently, however, Miss Redeau followed the eyes of one of the men, looked around and then straightened in her chair.

"Oh, Meester Barnette, you have brought me a dreenk. How nice! Come sit down here."

Mr Barnett delivered his glass and sat down on the cushioned window seat.

"Who has the other one?" he offered.

"That's your own," suggested one of the men.

"No, when I come crashing the party with two cocktails in my hands, that shows I've had enough already."

"Ah, you are a verrie remarkable man to know that much, Meester Barnette. Meester Schmalkin, you dreenk Meester Barnette's cocktail weeth me." There was a slight pause. "Meester Schmalkin was just saying that I was a spiritual bawdy to submeet my brain, my personality, my everytheeng—to who? Nobody knows. Perhaps to the dead, perhaps to the living. I do not know. Dr Fyke says eet ees always to the leevings. I do not know."

Mr Schmalkin himself took up the task of placing Mr Barnett in the current of the conversation:

"I was saying that Miss Redeau's connection with the spirits must be immeasurably more intimate than any physical contact could be."

A third man in the group offered briefly:

"It can't lead to infection."

"No?" questioned Mr Schmalkin. "Suppose Miss Redeau's whole psyche comes under the influence of a criminal, would there not be a moral and mental infection, Mr Brown?"

Mr Brown, the third man, laughed.

"No more than a phonograph would become infected through a record made by a criminal."

Mr Schmalkin leaned forward.

"That very thing you say, the mechanical figure you use, shows that Dr Fyke's experiments with Miss Redeau will prove precisely what Dr Fyke wants to prove and nothing more."

"What is it he wants to prove?" inquired the Georgian curiously, at the same time glancing at Miss Redeau.

"He is trying to show that the dead are dead," answered Schmalkin, "that they do not return."

"But that is just opposite to the usual object of dabblers in spiritism," pointed out another woman in the group, in surprise.

"The usual object would not be the object of a great university," said Brown. "They do things backwards here. They seize on the major proof that spirits exist and prove by it that spirits do not exist."

"How does the proof work?" asked the second woman, curiously.

"That is what my friend Derekson is doing for Dr Fyke," explained Schmalkin. "Dr Fyke is taking thousands and thousands of mental-reaction tests and is filing them away on cards. Nobody has read any card except the person who wrote it. When any spirit tries to identify itself through Miss Redeau, Dr Fyke will give it a mental-association test. If the spirit reproduces one of his cards, that will prove absolutely that spirits do exist. Because a dead person will be identifying a card which he wrote when he was alive—a card unknown to any living person. If such a thing ever happens, it will settle once and for all the question of immortality."

The group sat silent for several moments, then the second woman observed in a puzzled voice:

"But I thought you said he was trying to prove that there were no spirits. Suppose he gets a card reproduced—that would prove there were spirits!"

"Eef—eef he gets one reproduced," stressed Miss Redeau. "That ees the verrie point—eef he gets it reproduced. Eef he does not, that weel be an inference no spirits

exist. He has hired Meester Derekson to calculate the probability that a card would be reproduced eef spirits exist. But the same percentage weel be the probability that no speerits exist eef no card is ever reproduced. Dr Fyke theenks none of hees cards weel ever be reproduced, so that weel prove speerits do not exist. The more cards he collects, the greater the probability of hees proof."

In the semidarkness Mr Schmalkin shook his head.

"The whole experiment is foolish and childish," he said in his foreign tone.

"Why do you say that?" inquired the man called Brown.

"Because these things we call experiments can only go to prove the particular belief that makes up this particular moment in history."

Brown looked at the man.

"Would you mind telling us what you are talking about?" and he lighted a cigarette while he waited for an answer.

"Why, just this," defended Schmalkin. "This is an age of machines. Men must see the world mechanistically. In order to fulfill their destiny they must interpret everything—their lives, their thoughts, their economy, even the very movements of their souls—as the working of machines. They have even tried to weigh the soul."

Brown and the second woman broke out laughing.

"There you are—Destiny," pointed out Brown. "Since your training won't allow you to believe in God, you simply use the term 'destiny' instead. You believe destiny rules us."

"Certainly—it does. What are man's struggles against des—"

"Wait," interposed the woman, with an air of subtlety. "Let us suppose that one of Dr Fyke's cards should be reproduced by a man who was dead. That would overthrow your destiny—"

"But it will never be reproduced."

"Oh now, Mr Schmalkin, you are assuming your proof agrees with your conclusion—that's the very point of these experiments, whether a card will be reproduced or not. Now if you just out of hand say none will be reproduced——"

"No, no, I didn't mean that. I meant, if a card should be reproduced, the force of a great historic destiny would be so compelling that such information could never be revealed—it would be lost."

"Lost! Why, what are you talking about?" cried Brown, in shortening patience. "Why wouldn't Fyke——"

"I mean some little detail would prevent its coming before the great ruling scientific world," declared Schmalkin.

"Oh, come now," protested the woman, with the patronage of the solidly informed toward the fantastic. "What kind of a detail could prevent a man of science from publishing the result of his experiments?"

"Yes, and especially Fyke," put in Mr Brown. "Fyke has the greatest genius for publicity in America, and if he really should get hold of something——"

Schmalkin shook his head with the stubbornness of the obsessed.

"Dr Fyke might never learn of the success of his experiment—or he might be struck by amnesia—or the mere profundity of this new spiritual world breaking on his consciousness might completely disrupt his life——"

Everybody began laughing at the Russian.

"Yes, I can imagine Fyke's publicity agents being struck dumb by the profundity of the Doctor's discoveries!" cried the woman.

"You make Destiny very personal indeed." The man called Brown gave a patronizing laugh. "You seem to think it would prohibit or suppress any information that could be used against it."

"Destiny is a censorship?" ridiculed the woman.

The small man with the great lined forehead made a gesture.

"Ladies—gentlemen," he pronounced solemnly. "All that you say, I will admit, lies in the word 'destiny.' "

Came a moment's silence. The man called Brown shrugged, looked at his watch, got to his feet.

"Well, you can't do anything with mysticism. That kind of Destiny is nothing but a denatured God—a God with merciful kindness removed. . . . Hate to break up the party, but I have an engagement. Incidentally I think we should give Mr Schmalkin a vote of thanks for edifying us with the history of his life."

And he started for the stairway, laughing.

AS THE GROUP IN THE ALCOVE broke up, Mr Barnett maneuvered to be alone with Miss Redeau for a few moments before descending the stairs. That young woman, possibly by intention, assisted the Southerner in his design by dropping her compact and waiting for him to get it for her.

Unfortunately Schmalkin lingered behind with them. As a matter of fact the little Russian was at odd ends. He was not toughened to the hurried, piecemeal talk of American parlors. He was accustomed to the endless, half-mystical Muscovite conversation that meandered on through time and topic from dewfall till dawn. Now he looked out of the window to where he could see a distant bridge rising above the dark roofs of the city, and observed that the flow of lights across the great span was like the passing of human lives, out of darkness into darkness.

Mr Barnett assented to this much too briefly and swiftly to be sympathetic.

"And the bridge itself," wandered on the Russian innocently, "to build it—many lives were sacrificed. . . . The contractors knew there would be hundreds of men killed before they mixed a pound of concrete. . . . My friend Derekson could have told them just how many would be killed for a bridge of that size."

Mr Barnett nodded briskly, hurrying him along:

"Quite true, quite true—wonderful men, statisticians—know everything—how many dead letters will be mailed every year—how many pedestrians hit by motors—how many pounds of sugar each person will—"

The Russian continued brooding on his thought:

"There is one thing that, it seems to me, might restore compassion to mankind after the passing of the animals. They are instruments of communication. I mean, particularly, means of visual communication: television."

"Television will do a great work, no doubt," agreed Mr Barnett, rapidly trying to float Mr Schmalkin downstairs ahead of him and Miss Redneau.

The French girl laughed and came to the Russian's rescue:

"Meester Schmalkin, explain yourself. 'Restore compassion after the passing of the animals'—what ees eet that you mean?"

"Perhaps we haven't time to go into that," suggested the little man, noticing at last Mr Barnett's fidgety mood.

"Oh yes, yes, certainlee, Meester Schmalkin, thees ees a partie."

"Well—nothing—except, when men worked with animals, they considered the comfort and well-being of those animals. They were forced to do so, to some extent."

"Oui, I see that."

"But the care men now give machines is not a humane care. It is a mechanical care, merely to replace the parts. It is not to soften pain or save life, it is to keep the machine well oiled and use it up as swiftly as possible, with only the factors of machine expense, time used and work done to balance against each other. That psychology becomes set in using all the tools of construction, including the laborers themselves. Thus compassion vanishes. So many men are used up on a bridge, so many on a war, so many in polar exploration. It is a matter of figures. New men brought in to take the place of the dead are called replacements, the same name given to new parts for worn

machines. It is the psychology, not of drovers, but of mechanics."

Miss Redneau stood smiling at Mr Barnett's impatient movements.

"And television—how does that come in?" she queried mischievously.

"Won't you and Mr Barnett come and see?" begged Mr Schmalkin.

"See how television weel soften men's hearts? What do you mean?"

"I will show you in the laboratory where we are working on color. I will show you and Mr Barnett some remarkable things."

"You don't mean for us to go with you now, tonight?" ejaculated Mr Barnett negatively.

"Certainly. When will we three be together again in America? Never. One seldom sees one person again, much less two persons again at the same time. My friend Dereksen could tell you the probabilities against it. So if you do not come and let me show it to you now, I will never be permitted to do so."

"We would go weeth you, Meester Schmalkin," answered the French girl, allying herself with the Georgian, "but Meester Barnette ees in such a verrie great haste."

"Then I will explain what I meant to show," continued Mr Schmalkin, determined to finish his idea. "It is possible the actual sight and sound of widespread suffering will revive once more in mankind the sympathy that machines have killed. If Americans, through television, could see people being starved—to save, say, wheat—it would arouse a great protest—not only for humanitarian reasons, but perhaps because it would lower the price of their own wheat."

Whether his last observation was an honest non sequitur, or satire on the obvious desire of his companions to be rid of him, Miss Redneau and Mr Barnett never knew. At any rate Mr Schmalkin made a slight bow and took himself off

downstairs. The two turned toward each other, and Miss Redeau laid her fingers in Mr Barnett's hand.

"Now what deed you want to say to me?" she asked, with a very tender smile.

"You did know I wanted to say something?"

"Oh, of course, you were so nervous—and eempolite. I have seen men nervous and eempolite before." She laughed sympathetically. Then, with a change of mood: "Deed you notice that Meester Brown? He ees not in sympathy weeth us at all."

"Yes, I had noticed that much myself, Miss Redeau."

"My name ees Marie," suggested the girl.

"Marie," repeated Mr Barnett, warmed by the offered intimacy. "And mine is Andrew."

"André." The girl twirled his name in French fashion. "That ees verrie pretty. . . . But I do not like that Meester Brown—I theenk he ees—how do you say eet?—an *espion*?"

"*Espion*—a spy—here at Mr Medway's house?"

She lifted smooth shoulders.

"André, what deeference does eet make—the house?"

"But what makes you think——"

"I do not theenk. I feel he is an *espion*. A girl cannot spend her life in Europe and not feel an *espion*!"

Here Mr Barnett suddenly recalled the note which had been scribbled on the check in the restaurant when he lunched with Schmalkin. He hesitated a moment and then told Miss Redeau about it.

"Then you theenk thees man Brown ees the man who observes Meester Schmalkin?"

"I don't know, I was just telling you something I had seen."

"After all, what deeference does eet make to us?" She shrugged. "Now what ees eet you wished to say to me, André?"

"Well—suppose I take you home tonight. Where we can talk?"

"I weesh I could, but I am afraid not, André. Meester Chekolokovsky brought me here——"

"Yes, but that was just by accident. He happened to pick you up at the laboratory——"

"Yes, he happened to peeck me up at the laboratory, but he would be verrie disturbed, André, eef he did not happen to peeck me up here at the partie and take me home. And there was a woman weeth you at the laboratory, too."

"Ye-es—that is a fact," admitted Mr Barnett, who had forgot Miss Lester.

"Eet ees too bad, André," sympathized the girl whimsically, "that at parties couples cannot divide up and go home frankly weeth those they really prefer. Of course, in America, weeth their verrie quick divorces, eet ees almost like that—but not quite."

"Well, look here, when can I see you?" Mr Barnett moved a little closer to her and was standing, in a manner, over and around her, as men do at such moments.

Here both of them caught sight of Mr Chekolokovsky's head and shoulders rising up the stairway. The man pressed the girl's hand to inculcate haste.

"What's your telephone number?" he asked swiftly.

She lowered her voice:

"Eet ees Audubon——" Here she pressed something into his palm.

"There eet ees, written out—do telephone me verrie soon, please."

AS MR BARNETT and Miss Lester were leaving the Medway home to rejoin Dr Fyke's party at the car, young Fargason Medway touched the Georgian's arm.

"Dr Fyke and Prex were talking about you," he confided in a lowered, encouraging tone; then he introduced the girl by his side: "Miss Casings, this is Mr Barnett from Georgia. He is studying diplomacy."

"Diplomacy!" ejaculated the girl, offering her hand.

"Now is that nice, Mr Fargason?" laughed Miss Lester.

"A branch of diplomacy," softened the young man. "Almost everything is a branch of diplomacy. Anyway, they were talking about you." He nodded in a congratulatory manner, put an arm around Nancy's waist, and the two ran on down the steps together.

Mr Barnett was rather set up over the hint, and Miss Lester hoped earnestly that something would come of it. When they rejoined the group in Dr Fyke's car a debate had broken out between Miss Moe and the men students on which were the more uniform psychologically, males or females. Miss Moe upheld the female side of the discussion until one of the boys pointed out that this meant females had less originality than males, after which she shifted her ground.

Mr Barnett naturally listened to none of this. He was wondering, after this brush with authority, just what the

president himself could do for him. Eventually all the other passengers were delivered to their homes and the chauffeur drove Mr Barnett and Miss Lester to their rooms on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street. Presently Miss Lester wondered, in a lowered voice to prevent the chauffeur from hearing, why Megapolis folk talked of such uninteresting things—male psychology, female psychology.

"These people up here in the North—no two persons know the same set of folks," diagnosed Mr Barnett absently, "so they have to talk about uninteresting things like psychology and plays and pictures and how to make cocktails."

"It seems to me their talk always leads around somehow to thex," observed Miss Lester lightly, but with just a touch of superiority in her lisp.

"Oh yes—that," nodded Mr Barnett, instantly joining her on their common ground. Then he relapsed into thinking about the president again. He really didn't see what the president could do for him. But of course he was inventive and resourceful; that was why he was president.

"Did I tell you about little Mr Derekson working on television in the university laboratories? If he makes some great discovery he gets nothing for it. It goes to the university."

"Yes, I believe you mentioned that at the party."

"Yes—I did," admitted Miss Lester, trying to recall something else about their mutual acquaintances which she could relate.

Here Mr Barnett remembered that he and Miss Lester were not home yet, and the formality of the party still clung around them to some extent. He also tried to think of something to say, but instead of producing a subject his brain veered off on Miss Redeau. He thought how intoxicating this ride home would be if he were taking it with Miss Redeau. At the fancy he drew a little shivery breath and sat looking at Miss Lester.

He wondered why he felt as he did toward Miss Lester.

She was quite attractive and pretty enough. Then he suddenly saw that she reminded him of Matilda, his wife. The resemblance was not in her looks. It was just something about her. Miss Lester was the sort of woman who would sedately bear children, rear them properly and make an excellent all-round wife.

And the Georgian thought, with a sense of long privation, that this was an exact description of Matilda. Miss Lester reminded him of his wife and his wife reminded him of Miss Lester—his emotional association had fallen into a vicious circle. He wondered why chance should have lodged him in the same house with Miss Lester instead of a girl like Miss Redeau. Mr Barnett knew that if Derekson were asked that question he would compute how many nice girls like Miss Lester there were in America and how many sirens like Miss Redeau, and would give him his answer in percentages. And the percentage, of course, would be very, very small. Mr Barnett sighed inaudibly.

"You know," began Miss Lester, "it's extraordinary, the difference between a man who lives in Megapolith and one— You'll excuse me, won't you?"

"Certainly. What were you about to say?" inquired Mr Barnett politely.

"Well, a man from some other section of the country—say the South?"

"All right—the South?" inquired the Georgian in faint surprise.

"Well, a Megopolitan, on a ride like this—he would have made himself very dithagreeable."

"Not intentionally disagreeable, surely!"

"Well, no-o—not intentionally, possibly. But they seem to imagine every girl instantly and completely falls for their charmth. And you can't make them believe differently, no matter how—how rigorously you act. They think you are just modest or flirtatiouth, and . . . keep right on." Her voice was filled with resentment of past encounters.

"You know," opined Mr Barnett, defending the Northern men as best he could, "I believe it's because you lisp."

"Because I lithp!"

"Yes, you do sound so—you won't mind my saying it, I hope—you sound so sweet and innocent."

This appeased her on that score, but she said:

"Well, even with that—thill Thouthern men are different—thank heaven."

"Oh, well, we are taught respect for women from our infancy up," said Mr Barnett, generously declining any personal credit on that score.

Here Dr Fyke's car reached their rooming house on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street, and the two got out together. Mr Barnett had an impulse to tip the Hittite scholar, but there was an incongruity about this that changed the tip to earnest thanks. The doctor of philosophy turned his car in the street and whisked back in the direction he had come.

The man and the woman climbed the stoop together, and their hands touched as both reached automatically toward the lock. Miss Lester gave way, and Mr Barnett opened the door. He assisted her up the two flights of stairs under dim red night lamps. The touch of her arm against his dissipated to some slight extent his persistent thoughts of Miss Redeau. But even amid the intimacy of the night and the deserted stairs, there lingered about Miss Lester that aura of correct wifeliness and efficient motherhood. She would certainly make some man an excellent helpmeet.

They bade each other good night in the hallway between their respective rooms.

Once in his own apartment, Mr Barnett turned on the light and mused for a moment, then fished a slip of paper out of his vest pocket and stood looking at a telephone number. It was two o'clock. He was about to pick up the receiver and ask if Miss Redeau had reached her apart-

ment safely—after all, he would be interested to know if she was safe—when his telephone buzzed.

He went to the receiver and picked it up with a sudden tingling presentiment that Miss Redeau was calling him. A masculine voice, however, was on the wire:

"That you, Mr Barnett? . . . This is Medway, Fargason Medway. Say, I'm down here on Eighty-fifth Street, and if you would come down . . . Well, it's the—uh—the police station on Eighty-fifth . . . Yes, I'm here because —er—we met an officer in the park . . . Yes, Miss Casings and I—and the sergeant won't believe Miss Casings is Miss Casings. . . . Well, he doesn't know who she is, that's the point. We want you to identify her. . . . Now I appreciate that, Mr Barnett—both of us do—more than we can ever say. . . . Come on down as quickly as you can. Nancy is mad and crying. . . . The police station on Eighty-fifth Street."

Mr Barnett straightened up from the telephone, put on his coat again, but before he sallied out into the street he crossed the hallway and tapped on Miss Lester's door. When she appeared in delicate silks he told her what had happened, with the caution that she tell no one else.

"There ithn't anyone to tell," lisped the Iowa girl. "That's why people in Megapolith are like they are. Every couple acts exactly as if they were alone in the world—and they are. It takes early training in some small community to keep people sweet in a big city." And both felt the flattery of that moral superiority which hangs for an interval over strangers in Megapolis.

AT THE Eighty-fifth Street police station, Mr Barnett found young Medway and Miss Casings seated in the peculiarly drab and dreary office of the police sergeant. Both of them wore a guilty appearance, but then so did the sergeant, so did two or three policemen, so did Mr Barnett, so did everyone who entered the police station on Eighty-fifth Street.

Miss Casings' eyes were reddened, and she held a limp wisp of a handkerchief in her hand. Mr Barnett answered a few introductory questions from the sergeant, then turned and comforted Miss Casings by telling her not to be frightened.

"Frightened!" snapped the girl. "I'm not frightened! These unspeakable spying flatfeet interfering with our rights!"

"You're the Mr Barnett these people have been telephoning for?" inquired the sergeant in a routine manner.
"You know 'em?"

"Yes, yes, I know them, I know both of them. What—uh—what have they done?"

"Officer Middleton picked 'em up in the park," said the sergeant, with a slow, professional distaste in his voice for persons picked up in the park.

"Would he have picked up Fargason in the park?" demanded Miss Casings angrily, "if he had been by himself?"

"Certainly not—but he wasn't by himself."

"Then what reason have you to discriminate against me for being a woman! I have as much right as any man to—"

The sergeant gave a faint puff through his nose.

"Ask that after you've heard Officer Middleton's charge!"

"Now wait, wait," counseled Mr Barnett out of his legal experience as a politician in Atlee County. "You are both here. The officer brought you here for—some reason or other, and you want me to identify you so you can get out and go home."

Miss Casings compressed her lips and subsided into merely looking at the sergeant. Mr Barnett walked over to the sergeant's desk, leaned on the rail, nodded faintly back at the two prisoners and lifted his brows. It was the free-masonry signal of one man in a political organization to another man in a political organization. The sergeant closed his eyes momentarily and nodded in return.

"Well now, you can make some allowance for their age," suggested Mr Barnett comfortably.

"We make allowances for age," said the sergeant, "from nine to ninety."

"Then why—"

"We thought she was a professional . . . in the park. They both claimed she wasn't, of course."

"Oh no, she isn't," corroborated Mr Barnett at once. "She goes to the University of—"

"That's what they said—said she roomed in a dormitory. I offered to telephone the dormitory, but they didn't want that. I could see how she wouldn't, but I didn't know whether it was straight or not. Then the boy remembered you and telephoned you."

"Yes, I know 'em. She lives in a dormitory just like she says."

"Well, that's good, that's what she said she did, but—

er—you're connected with the university somehow—you would know."

Mr Barnett then explained his history as legislator and then county superintendent of schools and how he was forced to come North after some sort of certification. He then inquired the sergeant's name, which turned out to be Lannigan. Mr Barnett did not know any Lannigans, but he kept inquiring and found out that Lannigan's mother was a Lake, and the Southerner did know some Lakes down in Tilcomb County, Georgia. The Lakes had a big plantation and raised race horses. The sergeant thought that might explain his own weakness for the ponies. It came to him both on his father's and his mother's side. No wonder he was what he was.

"So you say you know these people," he observed at length, nodding at young Medway and Miss Casings.

"I was at a party at the boy's father's house. The boy left there with her to take her home."

"Well, all right, if they are from good families and no professionalism." He turned to the prisoners: "All right, I'm going to let you two go. But listen, young lady, our parks are for the benefit of the public at large. They can't be used as if they were your own parlor."

Miss Casings' eyes brightened with anger.

"Out in a park! Don't you realize that a park is a setting the most nearly natural for—"

"Now, Nancy," interrupted young Medway, "he's letting us go now, and there is no use going into a discussion with him."

Sergeant Lannigan appeared on the verge of holding his prisoners after all, but Mr Barnett smoothed it over, and he and his two acquaintances went out into the street.

"Let's find something to eat," suggested the Georgian. "I'm hungry."

The three looked about them. The street lamps were growing dim against a graying sky. At a little distance up the street the tower and cross of a church arose out of

a dark, irregular line of roofs. A milk wagon rattled by. Diagonally across the thoroughfare shone the lights of an all-night lunch stand. When they entered the place they saw a long counter fronted with stools; behind stood hot plates and a bright nickel percolator. Three chefs in caps and aprons sat on the stools in front of the counter. As Mr Barnett and his friends came in, one of these men lifted a head from his dozing and made a gesture.

"You people get behind there and take what you want —we can't serve you."

"This a sit-down strike?" inquired young Medway.

"That's right, brother."

"How long has it been going?" asked Mr Barnett.

The second chef eyed the clock for a few moments and then said:

"Fifty-two hours and eighteen minutes."

"My, that's a stretch," observed Mr Barnett.

"You fellows are doing a fine thing," declared young Fargason, walking around and drawing three coffees. "I'd sit here with you myself if it would do any good."

"You are not a baker or a hotel waiter, somebody to stage a sympathetic strike?" inquired the first chef.

"No, but I can put on a demonstration out at the university."

"Oh no, you get us wrong," corrected the second chef. "We were going to ask you not to do it. We want this settled ourselves. Ever'thing was setting jake with us until a delegate come to our local and called us out."

The third chef shook his head to get the sleep out of his eyes.

"I owned one of these joints myself two year ago, but the racketeers grabbed what money I took in, and the unions stopped my service, so I just shut up shop and joined the union myself."

"And now they call you out on a strike when you don't want to strike?" suggested Mr Barnett. "What do you stay with 'em for?"

"Well, you've got to line up with somebody who can give you some protection," explained the chef. "A man can't do any good on his own."

"Do you know what all this means?" asked young Fargason as he served buns and coffee not only to his own companions but to the chefs, too. "It means that labor is regimenting itself, learning to obey unquestioningly for radical action. Some leader will appear who will take over a regimented labor, convert it into a political or a military army, or both, and change this government from a self-centered oligarchy of wealth to a broad, humanitarian administration of labor."

"You mean the organizers who came to the locals and ordered these men to strike whether they wanted to or not, they are going to become broad, humanitarian administrators of labor?" said Mr Barnett.

"They are the underdogs now," explained young Medway. "The underdog always has to fight for his life."

"I've been in politics most of my life," said Mr Barnett, "and the only difference I have ever discovered between the underdog and the top dog is that the underdog is under and the top dog is on top."

"Now, that's cynical," returned young Medway, coming from behind the counter, eating one bun and holding two more in his hand. "I always guard myself against cynicism, don't I, Nancy? It sounds smart and sophisticated, but it isn't a judgment at all, it's just an attitude."

"That's right, he does," corroborated Nancy admiringly. "Fargason is always optimistic."

"Well, I'm off," said young Medway, turning toward the door. "Mighty decent of you to come over and see us through, Mr Barnett. See you again tonight, Nancy."

Mr Barnett, shocked, looked at Nancy as young Medway walked out of the lunchroom into the gray light.

"He's not going off and leave you like that?"

"Why, sure, I can't show up at the dorm at this time of

day with Med in tow. They are fairly modern at the dorm, but not that modern."

Mr Barnett followed the girl outside, under the Southern necessity to escort her to her home. He had to walk rather fast, as she was almost as tall as he and swung along toward the subway with a basketball gait. She seemed a very puzzling sort of girl indeed after what he had learned about her in the police station. A sentence which Miss Casings had used to the sergeant returned to Mr Barnett's mind. He made some remarks about the clearness of the morning as he considered the advisability of inquiring just what she meant by saying that a park was the most natural setting for . . . and there young Medway had interrupted her, and she had broken off her observation. . . . Well, he wouldn't bring it up again. . . . Here he interrupted his own thoughts to say that it must have been very embarrassing to have to appear before Sergeant Lannigan.

"Members of our radical club expect to have trouble with the police," explained the girl smoothly. "It is no more embarrassing than it is to get your hands dirty when you work in the garden."

"Why, no—no, I don't suppose it would be," agreed Mr Barnett. "By the way, you were saying something to the sergeant that you never did finish."

"What was it?" inquired Miss Casings, with a faint return of her belligerence.

"You were saying something about a park being a setting for something."

"Why, it is. It's the most natural place in the world for nervous relief. The wind in the trees naturally soothes you and softens your mood."

"Ye-es—yes," agreed Mr Barnett attentively.

"And the fact is that the rhythm of human emotions corresponds so closely to the rhythm of the woods, the return of flowers in the spring, the summer of growth and the autumnal fruiting. I think it would be of the highest

value to the human race if men and women would make an effort to blend themselves with the natural fruition periods of nature. And Med agrees with me too—perfectly."

"Sure—sure," nodded Mr Barnett, with gradual enlightenment.

"And they say babies born in March make the best babies of all because they were conceived in June. No, our Victorian practice of setting aside parks just for people to walk around in is absurd. Med thinks it is throwing away the greatest rejuvenating and stabilizing agency in our urban setting. Med says the time will come under communistic rule when married couples will be forced to live in separate domiciles, and the parks and beautiful wooded areas around our cities will be used just as the old Spartans used them, and there will be an enormous increase in the physical and nervous strength of our people."

Mr Barnett nodded a bewildered agreement. He saw now that Miss Casings and the sergeant had meant just what he had suspected they meant. But he had never imagined Miss Casings would go over it frankly like this, as if it were a physical-training drill. As he entered the underground, still pondering what to say, she interrupted his thoughts:

"Now there is no use your going all the way with me. You would have to leave me before we reached the dorm. If the house mother should catch a glimpse of a man—even an old dear like you—at this hour of the morning . . . No, it's better for you to get off at your own station and save your nickel."

WHEN Mr Barnett returned to his rooming house on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street, he was still lost in the maze of Miss Casings' moral set-up. He couldn't understand her. She seemed a very nice girl indeed, but she talked as if her relations with young Medway were nothing to keep under cover. Mr Barnett felt that these two attitudes, niceness and openness, were incongruous. In the South, if a nice girl had an intimacy with a young man she was at least squeamish about it. Such squeamishness was a kind of endorsement of the general moral code, just as a candidate for office sometimes endorses a political rally which he cannot attend in person. In the North, apparently, there was no general code to endorse.

When Mr Barnett reached the top of the steps he felt an impulse to knock at Miss Lester's door and tell her about his adventure. It would gratify her. It would be so precisely in-line with her opinion of things Eastern and his own opinion of things Northern. But on second thought he decided that possibly Miss Casings had made her confession to him in confidence; or if not her confession, at least her statement to him was in confidence. Or if not in confidence, then in the rashness of her anger at the police, which rashness, Mr Barnett felt, as a Southern gentleman, he should hold in confidence.

Fortunately for the keeping of this resolution, when Mr Barnett saw Miss Lester on the following day she was

filled with a penetrating excitement of her own, and the Georgian really forgot the police-station episode.

The cause of Miss Lester's excitement was a three-quarter-page advertisement in the *Times* of a book, just out, *The Relation between Your Emotions, Your Sex and Your Income*, by Dr Myron Fyke, Ph.D., M.D., Litt.D., LL.D.

In addition to a huge picture of Dr Fyke which looked just a shade handsomer and more academic than Miss Lester had ever seen him look, there were publisher's blurbs and excerpts from book reviews. Miss Lester was quite thrilled that she and Mr Barnett were acquainted with such a famous author; she read some of them aloud:

"Obligatory reading."—Arthur Dazewell, in *Contemporary Arts*.

"Never has the eternal mystery of woman been more lucidly traced to her moral and physical weakness, which have their origins in the subtlety and strength of her sex."—H. Bummingen Squee, in *Megapolis Index*.

"Profound, stimulating, reverent."—J. Pedaltoster Jones, D.D., Rector, Park Avenue Baptist Church.

"A book for children—but for extremely modern children."—Bill Wolf, in *Megapolis Sun*.

Following these encomiums of the press was the publisher's statement:

Five editions printed before day of publication.

Sixth edition on day of publication.

Seventh edition during week of publication.

If any reader will read up to the fourth paragraph on Page 31 of Dr Myron Fyke's *The Relation between Your Emotions, Your Sex and Your Income* and is able to stop at that point, his money will be cheerfully returned to him by the Publishers.

Mr Barnett and Miss Lester were caught up in the gust of this recurring literary storm created by their famous acquaintance, Dr Fyke.

Inwardly Mr Barnett planned, when he returned to

Atlee County, to broadcast the fact that he knew Dr Fyke and had studied in his classes. Nobody in Atlee would have heard of the Doctor—the school superintendent knew that very well—but he could tell them about this huge advertisement, and how fast the editions of Fyke's book sold, and it would all become a part of his own réclame. That was the pedagogical reward for residence in a great university.

"You know," said Miss Lester meditatively, "I wouldn't have dreamed that Dr Fyke, just to look at him, was that sort of a man—I mean writing that sort of a book."

"Oh, you can't tell anything about an author from what he writes," defended Mr Barnett cheerfully.

"Well, how does he know so much?" queried the Iowa girl, looking again at the quotations from the book review.

"Oh, clippings, clippings, authors get their stuff out of clippings and make them into a book."

"Oh no, you don't mean it!"

"Sure I do. . . . That reminds me. I've got three bags full of clippings Dr Fyke gave me to arrange into a book—"

"Gave *you*!" cried Miss Lester, in astonishment.

"Yes—three bags full. He wants me to arrange them for a book on superstitions."

Miss Lester was amazed, joyfully amazed, at this sudden revelation of Mr Barnett's honor and her own nearness to the literary arcanum. She went to her friend and caught his hand.

"Why, Mr Barnett—you helping Dr Fyke write his books! Why haven't you told me?"

"Well, I didn't think you'd—" Then, on an impulse, he stooped and touched Miss Lester's lips lightly and jestingly with his own. "That's my first royalty on the book," he laughed.

The instant after he had kissed her he was a little afraid she would be offended, because he knew that she was a very strict moralist, but fortunately the Iowa girl was not as severe with herself as she was with women living in the

East. She realized, of course, that this kiss was given in the lightest and most whimsical mood, so she said:

"I'll give you another when Dr Fyke brings out *your* book."

Then, to show Miss Lester his caress really was a mere momentary ebullition of the spirits, Mr Barnett began looking for his bags of clippings which he had somehow misplaced in his room and asked in a businesslike way if she thought Professor Stahl would be in his office at that hour. Miss Lester had to inquire who was Professor Stahl, because she had not heard of him in her five years' residence at the university.

"He is the one who advises me in my course in school management."

"He sent you to Dr Fyke?"

"Well, not exactly. He—uh—told me not to go to Dr Fyke."

"But you went anyway!" ejaculated Miss Lester in surprise, because in her five years she had done everything her advisers and instructors had suggested.

"Well, I went to Fyke because I didn't have enough credits to work under Professor Stahl for a degree, and after all he is just an assistant professor—the regular professor has gone away to Europe for the summer. And since Dr Fyke was much better known than Professor Stahl, and I couldn't get a degree from either one, I thought I might just as well take my work under Fyke. It would give me more of a name."

Mr Barnett told all this much more frankly after the kiss than he would have done before, and Miss Lester was much more concerned for him within the same time limits, but neither of them realized their delicately altered relation.

"He wouldn't be at his office at thith hour," said Miss Lester, "he would be in his home."

"Just where I want to catch him," declared Mr Barnett, moving around and around in the middle of his room.

“But a student never crashes a professor’s apartment like that!” cried Miss Lester.

“But that’s the way to get favors done,” declared Mr Barnett with certainty. “When a man’s in his office he’s all fixed for you; but in his home you may catch him with his shirt off and his hair rumpled—and he’ll have to do something for you.”

“You are the queerest man I ever thaw. Who else in the world would ever have dreamed of—— What makes you turn around in a thircle like that?”

“My clippings! My clippings! Confound it, I’ve lost them! I’d lose my head if it wasn’t tied. . . . I’ve got three boxes of clippings——”

“What do you want with ‘em?”

“Take ‘em over and see if Professor Stahl will help me arrange ‘em—he’s my adviser.”

Miss Lester divined the enormity of the situation:

“But look! Taking your clippings to Professor Stahl when he told you not to go to Dr Fyke! Besides, you don’t want to take your clippings when you ask him to help you. That would look like you expected help. Get him to promise first, then bring your chippingth.”

“That’s a pretty good suggestion,” nodded Mr Barnett, picking up his hat from the table. “I’ll find my clippings some other——”

“What are in those shopping bags by the door?” inquired Miss Lester, pointing.

“Oh, I believe they are my clippings!”

“Thought you said they were in boxeth?”

“I thought they were in boxes—I remembered ‘em in boxes.” He stood looking at his clippings. “Well, I believe I’ll take ‘em along after all—it ’ll save a trip.”

“Oh, but I thought we had decided we wouldn’t take——”

“I think I’d better take ‘em—they are liable to sit there and get lost again.”

Miss Lester broke out laughing, went up to him and

said: "All right, take 'em along, and I do wish you luck." She tiptoed and kissed him again.

This last kiss Miss Lester gave for the same reason that everybody in Atlee County voted for Mr Barnett, because he was big, good-natured and obviously unable to take care of himself.

AS MR ANDREW BARNETT moved to the subway with his bags of clippings, he reflected that possibly his wife, Tildy, would never be able to understand the inconsequential manner in which men kissed women in the North.

Take his own light caress of Miss Lester, for example; it was over the prospects of him writing a book. Also the kiss had caused him to hunt up his bags of clippings and take them to Assistant Professor Stahl. So the Iowa girl's light, playful salute had done him a very good turn, it had set him to work; and it meant absolutely nothing beyond that.

But while this discourse went on in Mr Barnett's own mind, he knew privately that if he had Tildy before him, in the flesh, he would never persuade her to view the incident in that cheery light.

However, there was no need for Matilda to know. Why should he worry her with the unconventional details of Northern life when he knew, within himself, that she had no real grounds for uneasiness? He would just let it go unmentioned.

At No. 19 Wycomb Street Mr Barnett telephoned from the street floor to Assistant Professor Stahl's apartment on the fourth floor asking permission to call. This was granted, no doubt, through the element of surprise. A little later, when Mr Barnett rode up in the elevator and

pressed the button to Apartment C, he heard a woman's voice pleading:

"Don't do that, Minton. . . . I wouldn't do that."

And Professor Stahl's cool monotone answering:

"Let him go ahead. You never use those keys anyway."

Here the buzz of the bell cut off the conversation, and after a dignified interval Professor Stahl opened the outer door.

Not until Mr Barnett stood before Professor Stahl with his three bags did he realize the enormity of his errand. The instructor glanced at the bags and inquired, with some faint indication of surprise, of what service he could be.

Mr Barnett moistened his lips and began explaining that he had arranged the material in the bags as logically and as naturally as he could, but since his work had some reference to Professor Stahl's department, he would like for the professor to check over his arrangement and approve it or suggest changes.

"Did this work originate in my department?" inquired the professor, who did not recognize Mr Barnett at all.

"You started me off," explained the Georgian, "and it bears on school management."

Professor Stahl touched one of the containers with his toe.

"What is the object of this work?"

"It is finally to be a—a work on superstition."

"A master's dissertation?"

"Well, I imagine it will be written in a more popular form than that."

"Oh—popular," repeated Professor Stahl, as if the word gave him a clue. "Then you're not to write it?"

"Well, no, I—I was making the collection and arranging it under the direction of Dr Fyke, but—it—it all relates to school management."

"You were to collect and arrange it?"

"Yes."

Professor Stahl lifted his eyes to Mr Barnett and asked in his ironic, impassive voice:

"Can you tell me what extreme limit of literary tenuity I will achieve if I become the ghost arranger of a ghost writer?"

"No, no, I didn't mean that at all. You see, I started my work with you, and I thought you would look over the arrangement I've made——"

"But you are not continuing your work under me, are you?" inquired the assistant professor in an impersonal voice, as if he were like some of the older professors who had so many students they could not remember any of them.

"I am following your suggestion," stressed Mr Barnett. "You explained to me that I could not get any direct credits in your work, so I did finally compromise on Dr Fyke."

The word "compromise" had some influence with Assistant Professor Stahl; then he remembered.

"But look here, you don't get any credits under Fyke, either."

"Oh no, certainly not. But you take, you know, the sort of people who don't go in for the groundwork of education, but—uh—are just interested in the surfaces, that sort has heard a great deal about Dr Fyke. And since I couldn't get any actual credits under you, I thought if these people could know that I—uh—you know—assisted Dr Fyke with one of his books——"

"So that is what all these bags are about?"

"Well, yes, it will come out as a book by Dr Fyke——"

"Of course I knew that he did that, but I never actually saw any—— You are supposed to arrange it?"

"Yes. He gives his stuff to some of his pupils to arrange, then he gives the arrangement to one of his secretaries to outline, then he gives the outline to Miss Moe to work in the anecdotes and to Mr Eldo to work in the informative material. Then he takes all that and dictates his books."

"Is that what you've got in those bags—an arrangement, as you call it?"

"Yes, yes, that's what I have," admitted Mr Barnett reluctantly.

"And he—he didn't like the way you've done it?" proceeded Professor Stahl, gathering information as he went.

"I imagine one of his secretaries didn't like it—some secretary had to make an outline from my arrangement."

"Mr Barnett, as greatly as I should like to advance your study of school management by arranging the material for a book on superstition for the benefit of one of Dr Fyke's secretaries, I am afraid I will be forced to forego that pleasure——"

At this point a woman's voice behind an inner door called out:

"Minton—Minton—do we really want to let him do it!"

Assistant Professor Stahl moved with dignity to the inner door and opened it without haste.

"I do not believe, Alice, that the removal of the first and last levers of the piano would injure the instrument or impair its usefulness."

A pale woman in a worn dress entered the room.

"I hate to fool with it——"

"‘Tamper’—‘tamper’—or ‘experiment’—not ‘fool,’ Alice. . . . May I present Mr Barnett? Mr Barnett is a pupil of Dr Fyke’s."

The woman was not particularly interested in Mr Barnett's exact status in the university and broke into a lively explanation of her own:

"Junior has composed a symphony at the Needham School, and now he is making one of the instruments he will need to——"

"Composed a what!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, in amazement.

"A symphony."

"But you say ‘Junior’—you mean your son? You mean you have a son old enough to compose a—a symphony?"

The woman gave a slight, pleased smile.

"He's only six."

Mr Barnett could only stare and bat his eyes in an interrogative frown.

"It does seem wonderful, doesn't it?" admitted the mother.

"Why, almost incredible!"

"Yes, the children at the Needham School compose symphonies and build the instruments on which the symphonies are to be performed," explained Professor Stahl in his level, uninterested tones. "Alice, if you could persuade Junior to quit working at the piano for a moment, tell him I would like to introduce him to Mr Barnett, a gentleman from Georgia."

Mr Barnett and the two parents moved so they could look into the adjoining room and saw a small boy of perhaps six or seven crawl out from behind the uplifted lid of a grand piano. He dropped from the top of the piano to the floor, put away a wrench, brushed his palms and offered a hand to the visitor.

"I am going to make a drum," he explained. "I told Mr Spruitt I could get the first key and the last key off of Mamma's piano. I watched her and saw she never did use them. I made a blueprint to show how I could put pedals to the keys and beat a drum with my foot, like I saw the Negro do."

"As I saw the Negro do, darling."

"As I saw the Negro do. Mr Spruitt made me a diagram showing me how to take out the key levers," piped the boy. "After the symphony, I'll put them back if they're not broke."

"*Broken*, Minton."

"*Broken*."

Mr Barnett shook his head in bewildered admiration.

"Listen, how does an outsider get into the symphony?" he inquired.

"Oh, Junior will get you a ticket, Mr Barnett," prom-

ised Mrs Stahl at once. "He receives five cards to go to five guests——"

"They're all promised," cried Junior protectively.

"Well, darling, you could ask Mr Spruitt for one more card for Mr Barnett."

"He won't give it, Mother. He will say writing another card won't make another seat."

"And listen," interrupted Mr Barnett, "I want a picture of that boy and a copy of the music he wrote. I want to enlarge it and place it in the schools of Atlee County. I just want to show the Georgia people the possibilities there are in highly superior children. I want it to be—you know—a star for the Southern children to hitch their wagons to."

"Minton, we have been planning to have Junior's picture taken anyway," reminded Mrs Stahl.

"Well, I would certainly appreciate having one, Mrs Stahl," said Mr Barnett. "Rather than do without it I'd have the photographer come up here and take it for me. Frankly, I never dreamed of such a boy."

Professor Stahl agreed to this with the reserved indifference usual to him, and the three elders talked in little snatches between Junior's further explanation of his symphony.

During this conversation Mrs Stahl asked Mr Barnett if he had seen where one of the tutors in the university was about to be deported.

Mr Barnett said he hadn't read today's paper and asked who it was. Mrs Stahl said she was not sure of the name, but she thought it was a Mr Little.

When Mr Barnett made his adieus, Assistant Professor Stahl told him he could just leave his bags in the reception room.

After he had gone, Mrs Stahl exclaimed:

"Well, isn't he one of the most charming and intelligent men we have ever had in our home, Minton?"

And Minton answered with a dry smile:

"Use Junior as a model for Southern children to emulate! He doesn't seem to realize he would have to begin all over with their grandfathers."

Going down in the elevator, Mr Barnett murmured to himself:

"Kiss 'em in the South—photograph 'em in the North."

MR BARNETT left 19 Wycomb Street with a feeling of something accomplished. He hoped that Assistant Professor Stahl would make such an excellent job of arranging Dr Fyke's material that the Doctor would feel grateful and do something especially helpful in the matter of his degree, or certificate, or recommendation, or whatever it was the university finally would give him.

A sudden fancy came into his head that when Dr Fyke published the book on superstition, he would allow the name, Andrew Barnett, to appear on the author's line with his own . . . a book on superstition by Fyke and Barnett . . . or possibly . . . Barnett and Fyke. He tried the two combinations over in his mind to see which sounded the better.

Mr Barnett's direction from Wycomb Street lay through the university grounds, and as he was passing the dean's office, the dean himself appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, Barnett," he called, "—that is Mr Barnett, isn't it?"

When he caught up with the Southerner, he inquired: "Did Fyke tell you about my consultation with President Winneman in your behalf?"

"Dr Fyke didn't—young Fargason Medway mentioned it to me."

"Well, probably Fyke was waiting to take the attitude

that he had done it all himself. Fyke is reticence itself. You'll always find him modestly shielding himself from observation on a monument or some such covert as that."

Mr Barnett laughed sufficiently to appease the dean's appreciation of his own wit, but he wondered how reticent the dean would be if he were getting two hundred dollars a day for a more perfect revelation of himself.

"I hope the president has something in mind for me," said Mr Barnett when he finished laughing.

"Well, no, the president never has anything in his mind for anybody. He looks over what his councilors have in their minds and selects."

"Er—did anybody have anything in mind for me?" questioned Mr Barnett, with some earnestness beneath his lightness of expression.

"As a matter of fact none of us had," admitted the dean. "We didn't quite see what we could do. And a number of us felt that you are going to occupy the office of school superintendent in Atlee County whether you get your degree or not; that it was not nearly so pressing as you yourself seem to think."

"That's the point exactly, Dean," cried Mr Barnett earnestly. "I don't want this degree for any personal reasons. I want it purely for the benefit of my county and my state. Of course I'm going to be the superintendent of Atlee County, but if you people up here don't give me a degree, then you set a vicious precedent in Georgia. If I occupy the office without a degree, other men who really are unqualified will do the same thing, and the very law I fathered myself will become a dead letter."

"Mm-mm," nodded the dean as he walked along, "that is a fact. I don't suppose you would consider sacrificing yourself in order to——"

"I am sacrificing myself. I am out a lot of money, what with matriculation fees and tuition and board and lodging —why, living is ten times as expensive here in Megapolis as it is in Atlee County, but I do it just to protect my own

law, which I consider for the good of the country and for the uplift of generations yet unborn."

In this last phrase Mr Barnett edged over into the set stump speeches he had made in Atlee County when he ran for the superintendent's office. His period possibly smelled a little, as Southern rhetoric seems to do when carried into the cooler climate of the North, because the dean remarked impersonally:

"I don't suppose you had thought of relinquishing the office to some man already equipped with a degree?"

"Oh yes, yes I had," assured Mr Barnett warmly. "But, you see, in Atleee County nobody has a college degree except the doctors and one or two of the younger lawyers. And any man who has gone to the expense of getting himself a college degree won't accept the pay that goes with the job of school superintendent. At the next term of the legislature I meant to get the pay of school superintendents raised because they had to have degrees, and if I haven't got a degree to show 'em, they won't raise it because I haven't gone to the expense of getting a degree."

"Good heavens, Barnett!" ejaculated the dean. "There is much more behind your quest than seems. If Megapolis University can raise the salary of anybody connected with the educational system in the United States, it becomes its clear duty to act and act at once."

"That's what I thought," agreed Mr Barnett.

"Well, I'll take the matter up with them again," nodded the dean. "After all, if Atlee County is going to have a college man at the head of its school system, we'd prefer it to be a Megapolis man. A school system is like that—start in one sort of a man at the head of it and there will be a long run of the same brand. Scholarship seems to carry a strong local flavor. I understand that is the way ants distinguish colleagues out of their own formicaries from enemies out of other ants' nests."

"I hadn't thought of that, but it would be a good thing

for the university to have a Megapolis man at the head of the Atlee County schools."

"Certainly it would be another market to sell our graduates, and another source to supply us with undergraduates. . . . Well, what have you been doing today, Mr Barnett—where are you coming from now? It is so seldom we have a man in Megapolis who has just stopped off between trains to take an earned degree that frankly I do find it quite interesting."

Apparently the dean was not as cut-and-dried an old fellow as Mr Barnett had at first thought, or he may have been just getting back from a cocktail party. At any rate the Georgian was glad he had met him. He told him he had been over to see Professor Stahl.

"Yes, Stahl, Stahl, very exemplary young man—maintains his distance even if nobody is within a hundred miles of him. What were you doing at Stahl's?"

"I wanted him to look over my arrangement of some of Dr Fyke's material."

"Fyke's material?"

"Yes."

"What sort of material—the usual scientifico-cultural serum to be injected into the nation at large?"

"I believe he is going to make a book out of it," returned Mr Barnett cautiously.

The dean nodded.

"A discreet answer turneth away wit." He walked on for a space, then presently continued: "How did you get on with Stahl—offering him Fyke's material? Suffered from chilblains on your way here?"

"No, no—he took it to fix it up for——"

"Stahl took it to fix it up for you?"

"That's right."

The old gentleman paused to stare.

"You don't mean it!"

"Yes, I left three bags of stuff with him. He didn't actu-

ally say what he was going to do with it, but I gathered——”

“Barnett! That is unbelievable! Why, you’re a genius! You ought to be the president of some university! It’s your sort of talent that the office needs. Yes, Megapolis is going to have to take notice of this. We are here to recognize and promote ability.”

Mr Barnett did not press the dean as to precisely what the university would do, because he believed the old gentleman really was on his way home from some cocktail party and probably would not remember this conversation.

Besides, their talk was interrupted just here by the rattle of drums and the screech of fifes.

At the noise the two men stopped, and presently a procession of red-capped students appeared, marching through the grounds.

“What is it now?” asked the dean. “Can you read their banners? I’m always interested to know which wing of the Temple of Civilization they are going to vacuum-clean next.”

Mr Barnett read aloud:

“ ‘SCHMALKIN! SAVE SCHMALKIN! TELEGRAPH YOUR CONGRESSMAN TO QUASH THE SCHMALKIN DEPORTATION PROCEEDINGS! DO NOT PERMIT GOVERNMENTAL RED TAPE TO CONDEMN AN INNOCENT MAN TO DEATH! SAVE AN ILLUSTRIOUS SCIENTIST FROM——’ ”

Mr Barnett stopped in amazement that swiftly increased to horror.

“Why, my God, they’re not going to deport Schmalkin, are they!”

“Who is Schmalkin?” asked the dean.

“A fellow who works in Faraday Hall—in electricity.”

“Don’t know him. What do you suppose he has done?”

“Why, nothing—nothing criminal. I imagine he must have got into America outside his quota, or perhaps his time is up—I don’t know what.”

"Well," said the dean philosophically, "laws controlling the immigration quotas should be observed."

"Yes, but Schmalkin left Russia under—well under extralegal circumstances, I am sure, and if he is sent back now and falls into the hands of the present government—"

"I should say that is all the more reason for his deportation," said the old gentleman, losing his drollery and becoming the dean again.

"That may be," agreed Mr Barnett, "but I know Schmalkin. He's a sort of friend of mine, and if you'll excuse me I believe I'll run after that procession and see if there is anything I can do."

MR BARNETT RAN TO THE drumming, tootling line of marchers and shouted to a pole bearer to know if Mr Schmalkin had been arrested. The young man motioned to his banner to indicate that that was all he knew. After a number of the marchers had filed past, Mr Barnett shouted out his question again, and this time a girl called back that she was sorry she didn't know.

Here Mr Barnett caught sight of Miss Casings and young Fargason Medway and went to meet them. He asked where Schmalkin was and what the group meant to do about him.

The two stepped out of the line of march and joined the Southerner.

"This is Mr Barnett, Nancy," prompted young Medway.

"Yes, I know Mr Barnett. We don't know Mr Schmalkin personally, Mr Barnett."

"Why, Fargason, he was at your father's party the other night," reminded the Georgian.

"He was?" returned young Medway without interest. "Well, I didn't meet him. Listen, Nancy," he said to the girl in a hurried voice, "one of us ought to keep in line. You talk to Mr Barnett and I'll catch up."

"All right, run ahead. . . . Why, Mr Barnett, we don't know anything except the government is about to deport

a tutor here in the university named Schmalkin, and of course our radical club would oppose that."

"Why, sure, I'm for keeping Schmalkin, too. I know the man. I'll do anything I can to help him. Now what is it you people are going to do?"

"I—I don't know exactly," said Miss Casings uncertainly. "We are marching around now, and a little later I think our club will receive a form letter to copy and send to our congressmen and senators—sometimes we send a form telegram."

"Let's send a telegram now," proposed Mr Barnett.

"Well, there wouldn't be much use in one person sending in one telegram. You've got to organize. No congressman will pay any attention to just one of anything."

"But look here, if you folks don't know anything about Schmalkin's case, why are you marching around and——"

"Because we are against our capitalistic government trying to preserve the bourgeois rule," answered the girl at once.

"But how would sending Schmalkin home affect the bourgeois rule one way or the other?"

"Because the foreign element is usually radical; to ship them home is to strengthen the bourgeoisie."

"But retaining Schmalkin is against our immigration laws—or at least I suppose they are trying to export him on those grounds."

"Yes, but the immigration laws are written for the benefit of the capitalist class."

Mr Barnett directed their steps toward Faraday Hall, where he hoped to gain some authentic news of the Russian.

"Fargason's father is a capitalist," observed the Georgian. "It seems to me that Fargason——"

"Oh, Fargason wouldn't allow that to make any difference with him," assured Miss Casings.

The thing that was now interesting Mr Barnett was Miss Casings herself. She seemed not exactly brazen, but the most completely unself-conscious girl he had ever met.

Here she was, absorbed in their argument and apparently quite forgetful of the fact that he knew of her impropriety with Fargason. Under the same circumstances a modest Southern girl would have been thrown into the utmost confusion; he had seen it happen many a time; but this Northern girl . . . He went on with the argument:

"It seems to me his father's class would make a difference. In a class struggle you've got to support some class, and it might as well be your own."

Miss Casings became didactic:

"The very word 'communism' derives from the word 'common,' something common to all classes—relief from fear, injustice, poverty—that is the very point of communism."

"Then you think labor, when it gets in power, will exert a wise and humanitarian rule?"

"Certainly. That is the very foundation stone of communism."

"Did you know it was the communists who starved Schmalkin's family and drove Schmalkin himself into this country?"

Miss Casings hesitated a moment and then asked:

"Oh, was Mr Schmalkin in that liquidation?"

"Yes, he was, and all of his family starved to death."

"That was a noble sacrifice of the few for the many."

"He told me his sister—burst open," said Mr Barnett, with a wry face.

Miss Casings paused another moment, until the personal quality of this picture lost itself once more in her general theory.

"Just how an individual dies doesn't make any difference," she declared. "Our slogan is, 'All for humanity and humanity for all.'"

This conversation, which seemed to arrive nowhere rather more swiftly than ordinary conversations are wont to do, was estopped by the two companions reaching the Faraday laboratory.

There was a watchman at the door who inquired their business and told them that Mr Schmalkin was not in the laboratory.

"They've probably deported him already," said Mr Barnett in dismay.

"Oh no, it takes the State Department longer than that to do anything," assured Miss Casings. She and her society had agitated against every deportation proceeding, and so she spoke from experience.

"Yes, but this has been coming on a long time," assured Mr Barnett. "When I first came to Megapolis I lunched with Schmalkin, and a waiter—or somebody, we supposed it was a waiter—wrote him a warning on his lunch check—or, that is, Derekson and I thought it was for Schmalkin."

"You don't seem very sure," observed Miss Casings, with a Northern distaste for these endless Southern qualifications.

"Well, we couldn't be. We didn't know who the waiter was aiming at—that is, if he was a waiter. But later on, at the Medway party, there was a detective—or something like that—shadowing Schmalkin——"

"How did you know it was a detective?"

"Well, we didn't know for sure. Of course he didn't come up and say, 'My name is Brown, I'm a detective, I'm shadowing Mr Schmalkin here,' but Miss Redeau thought he was a detective. She said she had had experience with detectives."

"I—imagine—she—has," stated Miss Casings, with a woman's cattiness.

Mr Barnett was genuinely incensed at this innuendo against Miss Redeau's mode of life coming from such an openly avowed practitioner of exactly the same thing as Miss Casings.

"Well, what we are interested in now," said the Southerner, "is Schmalkin. If, as you say, he is not deported yet, what shall be our next move to help him?"

By this time both of the Schmalkin rescue workers were,

for some obscure reason, rather annoyed with one another. Miss Casings came out baldly and said:

"To tell you the truth, Mr Barnett, our radical society is really not interested in rescuing *Mr Schmalkin*." She stressed his name, as though there were a great difference between Mr Schmalkin and *Mr Schmalkin*.

The Southerner stared blankly.

"Aren't you people parading around trying to prevent Schmalkin from being——"

"We are giving publicity to the fact that he is being deported," stated Miss Casings precisely.

"Then you are not really trying to keep him from——"

"Medway himself pointed out in a speech to our society last night that if Schmalkin were deported it would be another talking point against the inhuman capitalists who control America. Medway advocated agitating against Schmalkin's deportation, but actually letting him be deported and then capitalizing that, too. He said it would give us two big waves of publicity instead of one. Our group thought it was a very clever, politically constructive thing to do."

Mr Barnett could hardly credit his ears. His Southern suavity gave way, and while he held back the profanity he would have flung at a man, he did ejaculate:

"Why, that's the most disloyal, treacherous——"

"Disloyal hell!" snapped Miss Casings. "How can we be disloyal to any one person? A true communist is never loyal to a person, he is loyal to his cause. We consider Medway has a positive political genius for taking such a realistic view of the situation. That is what America wants, Mr Barnett—realism—realism—not this sickly sentimental bourgeois twaddle about the sacred values of the individual. An individual has no value within himself!"

Just how far the disputants would have got with their discussion was not determined, because here the guard asked mildly if they wanted to see someone else in the laboratory instead of Mr Schmalkin.

"Yes, yes, I do," replied Mr Barnett, determined now, as Schmalkin's lone champion, to stand by the Russian to the end. "I know a Mr Derekson who works in this laboratory part time. He is a real friend of Schmalkin's. I'd like to talk with him."

The attendant withdrew into the laboratory, and Mr Barnett stood in a silence that conspicuously stressed the difference between his straightforward fealty toward the Russian and the winding advocacy of the radical society in the university. Miss Casings also remained silent, conspicuously stressing intelligent diplomacy over a blundering and unreasoning adherence to a single unimportant unit to the disadvantage of the great, important whole.

In the midst of this clash the doorman presently reappeared with Mr Derekson. Mr Barnett introduced Miss Casings, who was unknown to the mathematician; then he seized on his friend:

"Look here, Derekson, what do you know about Schmalkin? Miss Casings here was parading for his release from deportation proceedings——"

"Well, Schmalkin is terribly worked up over it, too," cried Derekson, with a grateful look at Miss Casings for her part in the defense.

"Sure—he ought to be!"

"He and Chekolokovsky were trying to figure out who could have turned him up."

"My guess is Brown," nodded Barnett.

"What Brown?" asked the mathematician.

"Why, the one who was at the Medway party shadowing poor Schmalkin."

"Don't think I met him."

"No, you weren't up on the second floor. But I'll venture if we could find Brown and persuade him to keep quiet any evidence he may have collected against Schmalkin——"

"But you think Brown is a government agent?" inquired Derekson.

"Yes, I think that."

"We couldn't be tampering with a government agent!"

"It isn't tampering. It's simply putting before him an innocent man's case and asking him to do what he thinks is right. In the South we do that sort of thing all the time."

Miss Casings began an incisive, "As I gather from Mr Barnett, that is the Southern conception of loyalty—"

"Why, certainly! Certainly!" snapped the Georgian. "You can't be loyal just to—to causes"—he waved his hands,—"you've got to be loyal to your friends!"

They were interrupted by a small man with a sad face under a high lined brow entering the door of the laboratory and closing it after him.

"Schmalkin!" cried Mr Barnett, in enormous relief. "Why, the doorman here told me that the federal officers had come and taken you away!"

"Beg pardon, sir," corrected the doorman, "I said he was out."

"Well, I thought that was how he went out," cried Mr Barnett, annoyed at being contradicted by an underling.

"I told you he was out, sir," repeated the doorman.

"Well, where have you been?" cried Mr Barnett, with the edged concern of someone who has lost a near relative and suddenly found him again.

"Mr Schmalkin might have gone out for almost anything," said Miss Casings, smoothing over Mr Barnett's lack of tact. "The point is, he is at least not deported so far—I didn't think he would be."

"I don't mind telling where I've been," said Mr Schmalkin, with his foreign twirl. "I have been trying to find out who said I was going to be deported."

"Why, haven't you had any papers or any notices served on you?" cried Mr Barnett.

"No, nothing of the kind."

Mr Barnett looked around blankly at his companions.

"This is the strangest thing I ever heard of. . . . Well, did you find out anything—who did you go to?"

"I'm sure whoever Mr Schmalkin went to gave him the

best service possible," suggested Miss Casings, covering Mr Barnett's second offense with polite anger.

"I don't mind telling you," volunteered Mr Schmalkin. "Someone in the laboratory told me that there was a parade in the campus to keep me from being deported. I've been out following the parade, trying to find out what they knew about it."

"Following the pa—"

"Yes."

"Didn't they recognize you?"

"Oh no, none of them knew me."

"You were asking them why you were deported?"

"I was trying to find out what they knew."

Here Mr Barnett burst into the most irrepressible laughter. As none of the others shared his mirth in the slightest degree, he tried to control it.

"Uh—I—I'm tickled at—at the way public opinion is—is expressed up here in the North," he explained lamely. "Nobody knows anybody, so it has to be—well—some form of advertising—parades—telegrams to Congress—radio—and causes. People get tremendously excited about causes because they don't know any of the individuals in the causes—so the cause finally becomes far more important than the individual because the people at least know the cause—they've heard of that—" Here Mr Barnett fell to laughing again.

"Why, what could be more natural than devotion to a cause?" demanded Miss Casings.

"Well, according to my way of thinking, a cause isn't of any importance unless it helps somebody."

"Why, it will help somebody—it will help many bodies!" cried Miss Casings. "It will help millions—that is why any individual is relatively unimportant."

"When I said help somebody," returned Mr Barnett flatly, "I meant somebody you know!"

No doubt such crass parochialism as this would have brought quite a strong frank Northern condemnation

down on Mr Barnett's head had not Mr Schmalkin taken a hand.

"That is the very thing I am working on," said the Russian, with his twirl. "I am trying to make the whole world more personal. I am trying to extend human perception and sympathy to the furthest corners of the earth."

"How do you mean?" inquired Miss Casings, who had been the most offended, and therefore Mr Schmalkin's offering had been directed mainly to her.

"He means television," explained Mr Derekson amusedly. "You know, a Russian must have some mystical messianic objective if he nails a new paling on an old fence."

"Television," went on Mr Schmalkin, "will unify the historical moment into one great perceptive impression. We will actually see everything with our own eyes—the suffering of the poor, the madness and agonies of war, the inexpressible suffering of starvation among men that money may be accumulated by other men. The world cannot see these things and do them. Television will redeem our mechanical civilization. Machines destroyed us, but a machine will save."

"That swings over somewhat toward Mr Barnett's theory of saving the individuals and letting the mass of the people go," criticized Miss Casings, with an acuity born of her radical debating society.

Mr Schmalkin caught himself up and looked at the girl.

"Madam," he queried, "do you know why the idea of heaven has maintained its popularity for over nineteen hundred years, in fact right up till the present era, when we found out there was no such place?"

"No-o," admitted Miss Casings. "I have never studied folklore. I've never had time."

"It is because there has never been a generalized cause of heaven. The only way anybody could ever assist heaven was to prepare people, one at a time, to go to heaven. So the institution has been a great success, up to our present era."

ODDLY ENOUGH, for the next few days, his little tiff with Miss Casings filled Mr Barnett with an extraordinary sense of isolation. He arrived at this feeling purely by induction. He had known Miss Casings only a short while and had made no emotional investment in her whatsoever. Still their prospective friendship had started so piquantly, bound together as they were by their mutual knowledge of the girl's relations with young Medway, that Mr Barnett was shocked when the Schmalkin episode discovered that their real feeling and attitude toward life were poles apart.

This within itself would not have been so distressing had it not suggested to Mr Barnett that perhaps the basis of his friendship with all of his Northern acquaintances was as insecurely poised as this.

It really was a disturbing idea. And he noted now, since his quarrel with Miss Casings over the ethical objectives of loyalty, that all of his Northern friends avoided such topics as the race question, Southern illiteracy, the Southern share-crop system, Southern religious orgies and the K.K.K.

Miss Casings caused him to wonder exactly where his Northern friendships started and where they stopped. Even Miss Lester, who of late had fallen in a way of repeating her playful kiss and wishing him luck when he left and returned to his apartment—in the light of Miss Cas-

ings' repercussion, he was not sure even of Miss Lester.

His Casings upset was even transferred to his work. He suddenly grew doubtful that Assistant Professor Stahl's notion of arranging the material for a book would conform to the Fyke prescription. If not, then he simply had thrown away an expensive camera portrait on Master Minton B. Stahl, Jr.

With this in mind he started to 19 Wycomb Street to call on the assistant professor. He became so sure that Stahl's idea of an arrangement would not be acceptable to Fyke that he revolved in his head some polite phrase with which to get the clippings returned to him so he could shop them out somewhere else.

When he arrived at the apartment Assistant Professor Stahl was at his office, and Mr Barnett had some difficulty in coming to the point with faded Mrs Stahl. The young wife was so admiring of Junior's portrait that she forgot to mention the clippings. Her enthusiasm for the work of her small son caused her to show her visitor into the bedroom. She apologized for the location, but she explained this was her sunniest room and Junior was making a sun dial by marking the beams that fell through her windows hour by hour. On her wallpaper, written in a big, round, childish hand were: "10 . . . 11 . . . lunch . . . 1 . . . 2 . . ."—all, no doubt, under the inspiration of Mr Spruitt.

Eventually, however, Mrs Stahl's concentration upon her son flickered momentarily when she came upon the three bags of clippings. It turned out that the assistant professor had arranged them, after all.

"I don't know whether to tell you what he said about them or not," prefaced the grateful, poorly dressed woman in some uncertainty.

"Oh yes, do," urged Mr Barnett, with a recurrence of his pessimism.

"Well—I—— He told this to me. I don't know whether he meant to tell you when you came after them or not, but

he said that in each chapter he had taken the conclusion for the introduction, chosen the most improbable material as proof of the thesis, and jumped about among the anecdotal fillers, using the principle of contrast rather than logical sequence."

Mr Barnett smiled and batted his eyes.

"Well, that's fine, that's fine, Mrs Stahl. Please thank Professor Stahl for me," and he glanced at the picture of Junior on the wall and thought of how much money he had thrown away.

On his way back to the university Mr Barnett discovered that he had not the courage to deliver the material to Dr Fyke. To escape the personal ordeal he stopped at a telegraph office and sent on the bags by messenger. No sooner was the boy out of sight than Mr Barnett thought of Derekson and that perhaps the mathematician might have arranged the clippings for him. He hurried for a space along the Megapolis street, peering ahead, hoping to see the blue-cap with the bags and stop him, but the urchin was lost in the crowds.

As he slackened his gait again, the upsets, the obstacles, the untoward happenings that befell a candidate for a college degree harried the Georgian. He walked on until he reached the university campus, stopped in the Administration Office for a catalogue, and then pursued his way to the curved marble bench in its circle of cannas and began looking through the courses of study. He did not expect to find a class in which he could gain any credits. He was merely looking at the roster of subjects in which credits could be gained, as hungry men are said to peer into bakeshop windows.

The very names and numbers of the courses suggested intellectual riddles to Mr Barnett. They bore an appearance of exclusion, of learned withdrawal from the world. They were so far away that Mr Barnett almost felt a wring of mirth that he should ever have fancied himself receiving a college degree. Beneath this balked feeling lay

the profound middle-class Southern belief that the whole higher educational set-up was really impractical, ornamental frills around a solid, common-sense world of fact. He regretted the day when, in the Georgia legislature, he had fathered a bill requiring school superintendents to put on educational fancy dress for the humdrum work of repairing schoolhouses and paying off school teachers.

In the midst of these rueful meditations a woman walked past the marble bench, and Mr Barnett saw with an inward start that it was Miss Redeau. He jumped up and hurried after the French girl, calling her name in the loud but guarded tone that one uses in public places.

She turned, saw who it was and waited till he came up.

"Oh, eet ees nice to see you again, Meester Barnette. I have not seen you seence—let me see—the evening of Meester Medway's partie."

"That hasn't been my fault, but my misfortune," said the Southerner.

"*Merci*, you are very gallant, m'sieu."

There was a pleasant, easy, welcoming air about Miss Redeau which suggested to Mr Barnett, with a touch of rue, that she would have so welcomed any other man.

Aloud he was saying:

"Have you seen anything more of that Brown man we met at the Medway party—the fellow you said you thought was a spy?"

"*Non, grâce à Dieu*, I have not—have you?"

"Well, he really was a detective, just as you thought—a government agent. Right then he must have been collecting proof to deport Mr Schmalkin."

"Meester Schmalkin—deport heem? What a terreeble thing! What weel happen to heem when they get heem back in Russia?"

"I don't know," said Mr Barnett gloomily. "I hope they won't get him back. You were going to Dr Fyke's laboratory, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was—and you are, too?"

As they went forward together, it seemed impossible that the medium was the sort of woman that public repute held her to be. He wondered if, at this moment, he could do with her as he liked; it was nonsense. Then he recalled the slap the big football player had given her . . . that was its own mute commentary on the topic . . . still, even that was nothing positive . . .

He broke off these vaguely disagreeable reflections to ask:

"Uh—that big fellow—I never can remember his name——"

Miss Redeau looked at her companion with the most pleased and contagious laughter.

"No, you are not steel jealous of heem. How constant, how loyal you Americans are! I can hardly believe it!"

He was not sure whether this was in jest or admiration or both.

"You mean—because I still can't remember his name?"

"Certainly."

"Well, whoever he is—what does he think about Mr Schmalkin's deportation?"

She lifted her brows.

"Why should he theenk anytheeng?"

"Well, he's a fellow Russian."

"I do not know what he theenks. I do not ask one man what he theenks about another man—I ask what he theenks of me."

By this time they had reached Psychology Hall and went to the stairway as usual for their long climb. As the Southerner offered his arm to assist her, a sudden impulse caught him up to see if she really would be as unconventional as folk suggested. He was a little ashamed of the indignity his thoughts did her, but he covered it up with lightness.

"Look here," he said, glancing up the stair well, "it's a long way for you to climb—think I ought to carry you up."

She looked at him with wide eyes.

"Carry me up?"

He had a troubled moment as to how she had taken this, a fear that he had spoiled by his gaucherie the peculiar pleasure he found in her.

"Well—ye-es." He hesitated, distinctly embarrassed, and then tried to put it off as if his tender were made in quite good faith. "It is a long climb."

The girl smiled faintly.

"Do you weesh to carry me up?"

At this abrupt reversal of what he had feared, Mr Barnett's heart began to beat. He glanced up to make sure the steps were deserted.

"Why, yes, I do," he said, with a drying mouth, "if—if you'll let me."

"Eef you weesh."

She climbed two steps above him and continued her faint smile as he put his arm under her knees and around her shoulders.

Still amused, she leaned into his embrace with something resembling technique on her part and was lifted from the stairway.

"You are a verrie strong man, Meester Barnette," she observed, as impersonally as if she were standing beside him watching him lift a sack, "and verrie thoughtful."

Mr Barnett could not reply. She was much heavier than he had thought. He moved upward with trembling knees. He had a passing impression of the warmth and sveltness of her legs and hips and bosom pressed against his body, but the breathless strain of climbing under such a weight wiped out any touch of the voluptuousness which had led him on.

After he had taken a half-dozen steps, she twisted gently in his arms, with a woman's catlike ability to turn herself without any fulcrum.

"I theenk I am really too fat, Meester Barnette—I

ought to diet—but I don’t—I eat sugars—I eat too much sugars—but I do theenk you are verrie gallant.”

And she got out of his arms, blaming herself, talking of other things and complimenting him.

The rest of the way up to the laboratory, Mr Barnett did not say much, through lack of breath and chagrin. A queer anger arose in his heart against Chekolokovsky. If Chekolokovsky had tried to carry the girl upstairs . . . and he supposed he had . . . but perhaps he hadn’t . . . perhaps . . . perhaps he thought so badly of the French girl that he wouldn’t waste his strength . . . slapping her on the buttock . . . He was so breathless he could not even go on thinking. It seemed that Chekolokovsky in some subtle manner had put a slight upon him.

In the psychology laboratory Dr Fyke was at first surprised, then, after a moment, very enthusiastic—or, that is to say, very enthusiastic for Dr Fyke—over Mr Barnett’s visit.

“Miss Redeau,” he cried, bestowing his praise through the French girl, “Mr Barnett has the keenest sense of news value and dramatic balance I have met with in all my undergraduate students.”

Miss Redeau was surprised and Mr Barnett was astonished. The Georgian, in his disturbance over the French girl, had forgot his own connection with the Doctor’s laboratory.

“I deed not know that Meester Barnette worked here,” ejaculated the medium.

“Well, wait—wait,” interposed the Georgian honestly.

“Wait? What for?” protested Dr Fyke, smiling. “Your outline has the very feeling of publicity. I can dictate the connectives without the least trouble. It’s a book—just as it stands.”

“But—you know I told you who I was going to get to help me?”

Dr Fyke dropped his hands.

“You don’t mean to say that Stahl——”

Miss Moe, his secretary, broke out triumphantly: "I told you Professor Stahl had done that—I told you, Dr Fyke, you know I did."

The Doctor looked at Miss Moe.

"But whatever made you dream that Stahl—"

"My analysis of the situation—and the arrangement of the notes."

"Your analysis!" jeered Mr Eldo. "You simply took the opposite view from ours. . . . Mr Barnett, Dr Fyke and I decided that you finally did the outline yourself and that you were a natural—I mean in the book publisher's sense of that term."

"I said Professor Stahl did it," repeated Miss Moe, "and everybody in the laboratory was against me."

Mr Barnett was deeply gratified and almost embarrassed at the reception of his arrangement of the material on superstition.

"No," he repeated, "Professor Stahl did the whole thing for me."

"Then why doesn't he do some popularizing himself!" cried Mr Eldo, "instead of wasting his time for eighteen hundred dollars a year?"

"Well, wait. That is getting outside the range of our interest," suggested Dr Fyke. "Our interest is in Mr Barnett, and although he did not make the outline himself, I consider that he has done something a great deal more difficult and praiseworthy."

"You mean in persuading Professor Stahl to do the work?" interpolated Miss Moe.

"Yes, that's what he means. How do you explain that, Miss Moe?" asked Mr Eldo.

"I don't explain that," said Miss Moe.

"Well, it should and must have its recognition," declared Dr Fyke seriously. "That is the whole point about our work here. There is nothing cut and dried about it. Students who come here and develop ability in any line are encouraged and helped to go ahead."

"Well, Barnett has certainly shown ability, all right," declared Eldo, leaving off the title "Mr" in the first indication of fellowship that the Georgian had as yet received.

"And I shall see that Mr Barnett's talent is recognized here in the university," declared Dr Fyke.

This ended the colloquy. The Doctor could spend no more talk on the matter, as he valued his time at two hundred dollars a day, and already, no doubt, he was running in arrears with his corporation of one.

The party went into the inner room, where Miss Redeau's séances were held.

For a considerable time Mr Barnett sat watching this second performance of the medium with his mind on his unexpected good fortune. He wondered just how Dr Fyke would promote his cause. Possibly the book on superstition would be issued under the joint authorship of "Fyke and Barnett." Mr Barnett felt that this would give him an academic standing so unassailable that no one would think to raise the question of whether or not he actually possessed a college degree.

Presently Miss Redeau, with her white robe, her unbound hair, her virginal expression, beguiled Mr Barnett's attention from his professional affairs. For several minutes he sat simply looking at her, with his uneasiness about the superintendent's office fading from his mind.

She built up in his thoughts that impression of religious purity which he had felt, long ago, in his boyhood, when he looked at the old steel engravings in his family Bible. It seemed impossible, watching her like this, that she ever had burdened him with her actual physical weight. Rather it appeared that she might float away to some crystalline sphere, too spiritual to be touched, too pure to be profaned, as were his childhood fancies of the angels.

Presently she drifted, as Dr Fyke explained, "under control." Her expression became sad, and she began to weep. It was always sadness that shrouded her in these supernormal experiments. She was weeping and murmur-

ing, "Take care of little Anna . . . help my little Anna . . ." and there came the usual routine of identifying questions from Dr Fyke, their notation by Miss Moe and the telegraphing by Mr Eldo.

It was a regular order of procedure which no longer held Mr Barnett's attention. He was really wondering if Miss Redeau herself was so grieved and wounded as she seemed. The French girl posed the serious question which he had thought of many times before: if persons under opiates and anesthetics really felt the pain of, say, a surgical operation. And when they regained consciousness, was it merely forgotten, not evaded? If Marie Redeau really were suffering, it was a very, very cruel thing to thrust her every evening into this spectral abyss of anguish, even if, when she regained consciousness, it was quite forgotten.

He wished he could go with her to her home that evening and tell her how she moved him; how willingly he would have taken all her pain into his own heart if it had been possible . . . only, of course, in the North, he knew that a man could not talk like that to any girl, or he would be laughed at.

At the telephone Mr Eldo was certifying the factuality of the séance. He was saying:

"She is. . . . You can hear her crying now. . . . Her mother asked Dr Fyke to do something for her little Anna. . . . Dr Fyke—you don't know Dr Fyke? . . . He is investigating spiritistic phenomena. . . . Please step down in the basement and see. . . ." Here Mr Eldo, as he awaited his informer's return to the wire, lifted his brows and said, "I'm afraid this won't do. The woman is the wife of the man who runs the elevator in this building—or at least did run it till the strike——" Here he broke off abruptly and cried out, "What! What! Killed himself! Killed himself and her, too! My God, of course. . . . Cut us off! Call the police!"

T

HE STUDENTS SOON LEARNED THE FACTS behind the dramatic message which Miss Redeau had received in the laboratory. The man who had worked on the elevator in Psychology Hall had become despondent through being called out on a strike and had killed himself and his wife. Their little two-year-old child, named Anna, was left alone in the basement where the parents lived. While this tragedy would have been shocking in the South, it was not even unusual in Megapolis. It was caused by the heat, the strike, the inequilibrium of Northern nerves. The metropolitan papers carried several such stories every week.

The impressive and extraordinary feature of the incident was Dr Fyke's explanation of Miss Redeau's message. That message, he declared, had been received from the little girl, Anna, and possibly from the pooled consciousness of the world at large.

He pointed out in his analysis of the known facts that the elevator man's wife always had called her daughter "my little Anna." So the little girl, after the fashion of small children, in her attempts at speech never said "I" or "me" but always objectified herself as "my little Anna." So when Miss Redeau received the message, "save my little Anna" it was from the frightened child standing in the basement beside her dead parents.

The medium also had given the street number which it turned out the little girl did not know. Dr Fyke explained this under two counts, either of which his students might accept. First, the street number which little Anna did not know consciously had been impressed upon her subconscious mind, and Miss Redeau read it there. Or, second, the medium, in her state of trance, had access to all knowledge held by all living minds, and she simply tapped this enormous reservoir of information and drew from it the child's street number. Dr Fyke himself preferred the second solution.

"It is simple enough, once you understand the principle," the scientist explained to his students, "and it shows, ladies and gentlemen, how necessary it is to have somewhere in the world a body of facts that is absolutely unknown to any living human being. That unknown body of facts is my card catalogue of mental reactions, and it will serve as a point of reference to prove or disprove the persistence of human personality after death.

"It may be, at some time, a card in my file will be repeated word for word. If the author of that card is not dead, it will simply prove telepathy, but if the author is dead, telepathy will be impossible and we will possess an authentic message from the dead.

"With my rapidly increasing list of mental reactions, I hope in time to lay that uneasy ghost that has always haunted realism, the belief in the human soul."

Relieved cheers broke out in the class at this promised exorcism. Everyone felt that it would be a great forward step to make life more rational, more subject to our present wave of universal social discipline, to have the whole scope of human existence bound up in neat bundles of measurable length than to have it spangling out into infinity. There was something recalcitrant and incalculable about infinity. To multiply, divide, subtract from or add to infinity got one nowhere. The concept of infinity and eternity mocked at social regimentation. Dr Fyke and his

class felt this verity even if by chance they had never thought of it.

Mr Barnett eventually went home from the séance bemused by Dr Fyke's wisdom and ingenuity. It filled the Georgian with amazed admiration, when everything looked so hopeless against the great man's theory, that he could wriggle into credibility again. It was marvelous; it was inspired.

Now it is an odd fact that when any man's thoughts go climbing up to the peak of some high encomium and reach the stage of pure adjectives, in a short while they come sliding down again into some other topic. This explains, perhaps, the transition of Mr Barnett's musings to the French girl. He wondered what sort of apprehension, what manner of perception lay behind her weird ability to see unseen things and feel far-off griefs. According to Mr Barnett's Southern conception such powers were attached irrevocably to goodness, gentleness and things angelical. And things angelical, in Mr Barnett's mind, notwithstanding the maledictions and denunciations of the Protestant churches, attached themselves to things voluptuous, warm and sensuous. It seemed to him now a kind of dream that he had ever borne Miss Redeau in his arms. And the memory of his panting and straining and tortured muscles came back to him, not as pain, but as a kind of barbed sweetness. Yet, even with the girl's body in his grasp, he realized that he had gained no contact with that mysterious, elusive, divine something which moved through time and space as through a film of air.

No wonder she relinquished her body so impersonally when her true self was in some unapproachable realm. It was possible that she might indulge him to the utmost physical intimacy, and yet that would be like a far-away rumor compared to the utter possession of some demonic control.

A queer jealousy, as grotesque as it was fantastic, crept over the Georgian, and the illogical consolation came to

him that his own wife, Tildy, was just an ordinary woman, and that he would always find her there, when he went back to her, in their Georgia home, and not in some mystical otherwhere.

When Mr Barnett climbed the two flights to his apartment on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street, he hushed his footsteps involuntarily. Only when he was inside his great room did he realize that he did this to protect himself from Miss Lester's greeting.

After what had happened he did not want the Iowa girl's light kiss of welcome. He had never realized before that a trivial kiss could be a sort of sacrilege to a profound spiritual possibility. It was like frittering away a great treasure in small coin.

He closed his door softly, sat down in his comfortable old rat's nest of a chair and looked out the french windows of his once-luxurious room. He attempted to return his thoughts to Miss Redeau, but he kept thinking about the small slight he had put upon Miss Lester. He tried to change his thoughts and forecast how Dr Fyke could aid him in his Atlee County impasse, but he really wondered if Miss Lester was in her little room awaiting the sound of his footsteps climbing the stairs. If she were, he was doing a spiritually snobbish trick to slip away from her accustomed salutation because he had been elevated to a higher perception of value.

As these thoughts reproached him he got reluctantly out of his chair, dissembled his slight distaste, went across the narrow hallway, tapped softly on Miss Lester's door and opened it.

The girl sat on her bed, looking with a bleak countenance out of her narrow window onto her court. She did not even turn as Mr Barnett stood in the doorway, but continued staring at the scaly brick wall which she could dimly discern.

A disturbing thought came to the Georgian that Miss

Lester, by some means, had learned of his adventure with the French girl; how he had taken her in his arms and struggled up a few steps. He did not see how it was possible for Miss Lester to have come by such information, but he knew that women continually did precisely that sort of impossible thing. His wife, Tildy, for instance; he never made one of his electioneering rounds in Atlee County but that Tildy knew and reproached him bitterly for every little ingratiating act and word he had done or said in trying to win over the women's votes. How she found out all of his little tricks, he never could divine.

Now he was surprised and a little dismayed to see the same trait turn up in Miss Lester.

Automatically he adopted his accustomed defense. He put on the innocent manner and said, in the solicitous tone which he always used on Tildy:

"Why, Letah, hon, what's the matter? Don't you feel well, darling?" He went over, stooped and kissed her gently on the cheek.

Miss Lester drew a long breath.

"I'm all right—it's nothing. . . . I have a letter here from an aunt of mine."

Mr Barnett was quite relieved and instantly became sympathetic.

"I hope it isn't bad news, Letah."

"Well, no-o—I don't thuppoth it is. I don't know whether it is or not."

"You know what it says, don't you?" he asked, with the subdued cheerfulness an adult uses toward a disturbed child.

"Did you ever hear of Mary Lake Themberly?"

"Mary Lake Semberly? I don't believe I ever did."

"A lot of people do know her. She started a kind of farm and printing press and musical organization—a school for persons of a religiouth turn of mind. It's quite an institution."

"Yes, I've heard of that *sort* of thing," stressed Mr Barnett, wondering.

"She is a very old woman now. She started this place yearth ago. But the name of it, the Mary Lake Themberly Christian Community, somehow makes her still theem a young girl."

"You say you received a letter from her?" inquired Mr Barnett, hoping to get Miss Lester along with her story.

"Ye-es—I did."

"Well, why did the letter make you so blue, honey? Hasn't interfered with—uh—your financial arrangements, I hope?"

"Oh no, nothing like that. Her letter said she had dreamed that I was in great danger and asked me to be very careful of my health and thafety."

Mr Barnett was rather nonplused.

"I don't quite see why your aunt's interest and counsel should——"

"Oh, but Aunt Mary's dreams are important things in our family. When she dreams about one of us, she always writes and sometimes telegraphs."

"What—what does she dream?"

"Different things. Different bad things that are about to happen to some of the family unless we do what she thays."

"But, hon, what is she saying for you to do? I don't quite under——"

"She is telling me to be careful of my health and thafety."

"But gracious, Letah, that's good, that's fine. I recommend the same thing myself!"

"Yes, but Aunt Mary Lake means my moral health, my moral thafety. That's the only sort of health and safety Aunt Mary Lake believes in—and if I don't—well—thomething bad will happen to me."

This gave Mr Barnett some pause, and he inquired, a little more carefully:

"I see. Then what moral matter do you suppose she's driving at when she writes you to—uh—take care of your health and safety?"

"Well—I thought maybe she meant—uth."

"Us!"

Miss Lester nodded bleakly.

"I know you are a married man. I've realized that all the time. I dreamed the other night that your wife came up here and—and turned into a terrible thnake."

"Ugh! But, Letah, we—we haven't done anything—we haven't even thought——"

"I know it, but Aunt Mary Lake Semberly goes to all the trouble to write me a letter advising me to be careful of my health and safety, and you are the only f-fault I've got that I can leave off."

"Leave me off!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, quite taken aback.

"Yeth. When Aunt Mary Lake writes to one of the family she always means for that one to quit something. . . . I heard you come up the steps a while ago, but I—I didn't come out to—to meet you. Y-you're all I've got to quit. . . . I thought I ought to tell you why—that ith only fair."

She became silent, staring through her window at the featureless brick wall and swallowing, evidently at the tears that tickled her throat.

Mr Barnett had never felt so sorry for any woman. He wanted to put his arms around her and hold her close in the midst of her great pain in renouncing him.

"Well, Letah, if—if you feel like that, you know I'll do everything in my power——"

"Yes, I know—I know—you are the very thoul of honor. I can't imagine what Aunt Mary Lake can thee in you to——"

"You don't suppose it could be someone else?"

"There isn't anybody elth. I'm too old to have one affair after another, like a young girl. I—I'm too old to have

any affair at all. But—it—it was so thweet to—to have a man—come home in the evening—go away in the morning—it— Oh, it helped the day!"

Mr Barnett was melted.

"Listen—listen, darling. Kiss me good-by, and if you should ever decide otherwise, come to me and tell me about it—but if you really feel that your Aunt Mary Lake meant—meant me—then it—it's all right. I'll understand."

Miss Lester was frankly touching her eyes with her handkerchief. She smiled faintly.

"I knew you would say that. No, I don't think we'd better kith any more. After all, our—our feelings really aren't involved. We're—juth friendth."

"Good friends," stressed Mr Barnett gravely.

"Yeth—very good friendth. So . . . good-by, my very good friend."

In the depression of the moment, Mr Barnett forgot that just a few minutes before he had been, as it were, a fugitive in hiding from Miss Lester's kisses on highly moral grounds. Now he felt very empty indeed. He was turning back to his own room with quite a long face when Miss Lester remembered something:

"Oh, wait, hereth a letter for you. I brought it up with my mail from the hall."

She placed an official envelope in his hands. Mr Barnett glanced at it absently. He was thanking her in a sober voice for her kindness, when he happened to observe that the communication came from Dean Overbrook's office.

"Why, look who this is from!" he ejaculated.

"Yeth, I'd notithed that," nodded the girl, with some apprehension in her tone. "I—I wondered if—if I had cauthed you to fail—or if I had anything to do with it."

"Oh no, it couldn't be that!" cried the Georgian, "because the university has no concern with any question of—ah—moral conduct among the students." Mr Barnett opened his letter and read aloud, "'Will you kindly call

at my office at your earliest convenience? W. H. OVERBROOK, DEAN.'"

At the expression on his face Miss Lester put her arms about his neck and pressed her mouth to his in a prolonged kiss of sympathy. She removed her lips long enough to say tragically, "Andrew, dear, I hope it's all right," and then put them back again.

ON THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON Mr Barnett set out for Dean Overbrook's office, giving himself time to linger for a space on the marble bench, then go on to see the dean and return to the bench and meet Miss Redeau immediately afterwards.

His program was not timed with any Northern exactitude; he simply meant to do those three things. He liked to sit on the marble bench. It was seldom occupied by the hurried summer students, and it gave him an impression of being some part of an old Roman villa. He had sat in the place so often that he had developed a possessive feeling toward it.

On this particular afternoon, however, his rights were challenged by a blue-black man with shining jet-black hair who already was on the bench. Mr Barnett entered the circle and walked around, slowly considering whether or not he should sit on the seat with a black man. There was much of the seat unoccupied, twelve or fourteen feet of it, but if the intruder were a Northern Negro, Mr Barnett meant not to sit with him. If there is one person in the world anathema to a Southern man it is a Northern Negro—that is, the generic Northern Negro. Individually the Northern Negro is quite often a charming and delightful companion, but the generic Northern Negro, to a Southerner, is impossible.

As these pre-judgments passed through Mr Barnett's mind, he appraised the straightness of the intruder's hair, the thinness of his lips, the largeness and melancholy of his eyes, and finally decided that he was not of African descent. Once he felt safe from contamination he sat down genially by the fellow and introduced himself with that Southern naïveté which amounts almost to a technique.

The fellow indeed was not a Negro but an Indian. His name was Rani Gup. Mr Barnett immediately began a discussion of the cruelty and inhumanity of the caste system in India, which Mr Gup defended on the grounds that it gave stability to the social organism of his country.

"But look at America," praised Mr Barnett. "We have no caste system, but our democracy is as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar."

"How do you mean, solid?" inquired the Hindu curiously.

"I mean solid—that it will last a long time," repeated Mr Barnett patriotically.

"I am surprised to hear you say that, sitting as we are now in the very center of occidental moral and physical change."

"You mean here—here is the center of change?" inquired Mr Barnett.

"Certainly. This university—any modern occidental university—pronounces a continuous death sentence on the people who evolve it."

"Afraid I don't see that. It isn't a Hindu joke, is it?"

"Not at all," returned Mr Gup seriously. "A university such as this continually criticizes and changes the manners, morals, religion and science of a people. But those qualifiers reach down to the very essence of the people themselves. Change these and the people change—not only in habits and appearance, but in their very measurements. For example, the present generation in America is taller than the preceding one—and all that has happened within one single life span—only one!"

"Mm—ye-es, that's true. But I don't see——"

"Your colleges are the foci of this change. Here men work continuously changing any given social, religious and technological organization and setting up in its stead another organization, more complex and in more unstable equilibrium."

"Why, that's progress!" ejaculated Mr Barnett.

"It is innovation and death," replied Mr Gup. "Each generation, as it passes away, becomes extinct. Take your own father and his generation, whoever he was—there are now no more men like him. When you pass on there will be no more men like you. Progress and suicide, they are the same thing."

"But men would change anyway," pointed out Mr Barnett, who found the black man's point of view absurd but interesting.

"Not so rapidly if their universities sought stability instead of instability," suggested Mr Gup.

"What is there to learn at a university except something new?" queried the Georgian, at sea.

"They might develop their moral and spiritual powers," suggested the blue-black man. "When the spirit learns to command more completely its physical and technical milieu, it is not death, but progress. When the physical and technical milieu commands and changes the spirit, that is death. American education is like a man who continuously builds himself new homes and never lives in one. He perishes running here and there with his stones and his new blueprints."

In Mr Barnett's unspoken comment, Mr Gup's whole conversation was very flighty, but the fact that there would be no more men like his own father did strike home to the Georgian. Mr Barnett's father had been a Confederate soldier in the Civil War, and the slant of those old men toward life, their mixture of fineness and coarseness, their feeling of right and wrong, their loyalties and enmities, were as dead and irreproducible as Caesar. And

so, too, he and his generation would be, and so would his son's—broken molds cast aside in the progress of history. Well, when one thought of it, there was a kind of plaintive air to it; it made, somehow, the brevity of his life more brief. But it was the right thing to do. It was progress.

"The reason you think and feel that," said Mr Gup, "is because you have given up all consideration and all hope of your real spiritual life; you feel if you can make your body more and more comfortable and tender, if you can give it more and more pleasurable and less and less painful sensations, if you can move it about more and more swiftly from point to point—that is the whole content of life. That is why you believe it is the right thing to do."

Only sometime afterward did Mr Barnett realize that Mr Gup had answered his thoughts, not his words, but at the moment the two were interrupted by two young men, one armed with a camera, entering their circle of flowers.

They came in briskly. One of them said to the Hindu:

"You are Mr Rani Gup—you don't mind our taking a picture of you, do you? Jake, take a shot showing the library in the background. Mr Gup, what do you attribute your powers to—diet, thickening of the skin on your feet, some sort of anesthesia you can produce?"

As the photographer circled around close to Mr Barnett in getting the picture, the Georgian asked:

"Who is it? What's he done?"

"Walked through a pit of coals barefooted," explained the photographer absently, with his attention centered on his instrument and Mr Gup.

MR ANDREW BARNETT GLANCED at his watch, saw he just had time to get to the dean's office before Miss Redeau would be along, so he set off at once for the Administration Building. His thoughts, however, clung to the Hindu. If the black man actually could walk through a bed of live coals and come out unscathed, then all the nonsensical things he had said suddenly took on an air of authority. It seemed evident to Mr Barnett that any man who could walk through fire would have some peculiar insight into the influence of colleges on civilization.

A little later, however, these notions were driven from his head by his entrance into the dean's office.

The dean himself glanced up, saw who it was and put by his work with a pleased expression.

"Mr Barnett, you are well come in the primary meaning of those two words," began the dean cordially. "Take that chair over by the window. It isn't for delinquents, it's for friends."

As Mr Barnett expressed his appreciation, the dean cleared his throat and began his exordium. The old gentleman was like a broad jumper; he could not get up the momentum for his take-off into any modern subject without a long, preliminary run through history. So he began explaining to Mr Barnett that when the priest had disappeared as a guiding power in human affairs, the physician had taken over one sector of his authority, the judge an-

other, the legislator another and the politician another.

"This is not a close analysis," warned the dean, "but it frames a working hypothesis sufficient for our purpose."

Mr Barnett glanced at the electric clock on the wall and began calculating Miss Redéau's schedule, now that he was sure the dean did not have him up on the French girl's account.

"One of our modern difficulties," the dean went on to say, "is that the responsibility of the priest has not been transmitted to his modern representatives. Of course no branch of the trichotomy can feel the overwhelming responsibility of a man to his God. However, the physician does feel his responsibility to his patients, and the patients check his performances by the results he produces on them. The lawyer and the judge are subject to the same discipline. But the politician, the lawmaker, attains his office through one group of criteria, and he performs his work under a totally different group of criteria, so there is no check-up between the power that elects a political leader and what he actually accomplishes. So, since the priestly idea of God has evaporated from human consciousness, the politician is entirely without moral or humanitarian control."

The hands of the electric clock, with an ineluctableness that so precisely mimicked the flight of time itself, moved past the moment when Miss Redéau would walk by the marble bench on her way to the laboratory. This did not fill Mr Barnett's heart with the despair which it would have brought to a younger man, but he thought to himself, a little ruefully, "Well, whatever I could have accomplished with her today, I will probably be able to do tomorrow," and with this very sensible if somewhat middle-aged thought, he gave his attention completely to the dean.

"Now you were talking about the—the criteria," he recollect ed vaguely, "—the groups of criteria——"

"Oh yes, yes, that. I'll explain that," offered the dean at once. "You see, politicians are elected for their bon-

homie, their friendliness, their willingness to do little individual good turns for the constituents, and those good turns usually take the form of mitigating and ameliorating the very laws which the politicians enact. It is exactly as if you should hire your physician because he came around now and then and conspired with you to make yourself a little sick."

Mr Barnett blinked at the dean and suddenly broke out laughing, then instantly hoped that the dean considered what he had just said as funny.

The old gentleman, however, went on, solemnly enough:

"As I say, the politicians are elected for the qualities I have mentioned, but they function in a realm of statecraft, an art which requires the widest information, the most logical and at the same time the most intuitionial thinking, and the greatest social inventiveness, but not one of these qualities go to make up the hail-fellow-well-met who gets himself elected. In fact the 'hailer' and 'well-metter' a fellow is, the emptier he usually is of all those qualities that should go into a statesman. That is why I say the politician is elected by one set of criteria and functions under another."

"That's very interesting," said Mr Barnett, privately amused that the dean should write him a note to come and listen to a long, pointless rigmarole like this.

"Now this university and a number of other universities are attempting to make an effort to cure this cancer in our national life," proceeded the dean seriously. "We have established schools for public service, our graduates go out into the world, but the very fact that they do know something about their profession of public guidance causes them to be unacceptable to the electorate. They are too bookish, they are too serious, they don't mix. That is, of course, because the qualifications for gaining an office and the qualifications for running it are not only different, they are incompatible, more or less."

Mr Barnett began nodding slowly, wondering now, a

little, if the dean did have anything in the back of his head.

"Mind you, I say 'more or less,'" stressed the dean.

"Yes, I noticed you said 'more or less.' "

"Now it is precisely in those debatable latitudes of 'more or less' that a university functions. A university is the exploratory and inventive power of the human race to widen the 'more' and lessen the 'less.'" The old gentleman licked his thin lips slightly, in self-appreciation of this typically academic phrase which he had struck off.

"All right," agreed Mr Barnett, "lessen the less, and lesson the more."

"Lessen the more?"

"No, I spell it the other way—l-e-s-s-o-n the more."

"Oh good, good, very good!" cried the dean, whose books and public speeches were spotty with educational wisecracks and puns and suchlike juvenilia. This one almost threw the old gentleman off his theme. "What were we talking about?"

"Universities helping to fix things."

"Oh yes, certainly. Now here is the point: The university sees the problem to be solved. It must close the hiatus between the politician electioneering and the politician elected, it must integrate those two sets of criteria."

"O.K.," agreed Mr Barnett, wondering still more what the dean was coming to.

"So the board has decided to set up a chair of practical politics, and the duty of the instructor shall be to teach the undergraduate how to make himself popular, how to get himself liked, how to persuade people to vote for him. In other words when this university supplies one group of knowledges, it will supply also its supplementary group." The dean moistened his lips again because he had used the plural of "knowledge."

"Well, if you want my opinion on it, that will be a very good thing," said Mr Barnett. "I've dabbled in politics all my life, and I certainly know that a man can't do his best in an office unless he first gets the office."

Dean Overbrook smiled faintly.

"I appreciate your concurrence in our opinion very much, Mr Barnett, but I didn't ask you to come here purely for that. I asked you to come here to offer you the university's first class in practical politics."

"Offer me the first class . . . Would I get a credit for it if I can enter it?"

"I mean I am offering you the tutorship, the instructorship of the first class in practical politics. It will be your class—you are to teach it."

"You don't mean me—teach a class in the univ——"

"Yes, yes, you. You are a man who will certainly teach directly from experience. You will not be sidetracked by theory. Your students won't need theory. They will have plenty, plenty of theory. They will be able to take what you give them and arrange it among the categories of their knowledges."

"But I never taught in my life!"

"You have been a successful politician all your life."

"But in a very small way. I never got any higher than the state legislature."

"But you know what you did to get there?"

"Oh sure, I know what I did—and I know what a lot of other fellows did, too."

"Perfect, perfect. You will meet your classes at eight-fifteen A.M. every Tuesday and Thursday in Room 710, Social Science Hall. Your work for the semester will carry a stipend of five hundred and thirty-one dollars and fifty-six cents."

Mr Barnett sat staring at the dean with a feeling that the floor was unsteady.

"And the board thought also," smiled the dean, "that when you return to your position of county superintendent in Georgia, the fact that you have been an instructor in Megapolis University might be the equivalent of that degree which, it seems, it is so necessary for you to possess if you are to hold your position."

When Mr Barnett came out of the dean's office, he was dazed. He looked around at the buildings of the great organization, which Mr Gup fantastically had said was poisoning the land with progress, and tried to realize that he was part of it. He was one of the professors; he was one of the doctors.

As he saw the other summer students scurrying about, trying to tamp an impossible number of points within a six-weeks' term, he wondered what they would think if they knew that he who had no points at all, who indeed had not even been able to enter a course that did carry a point, had by his sheer personal knowledge and merit been elevated to a chair.

Of course they would never know. Some of them would read of his promotion in the college papers, but he would be to them merely a name and an address. In the Megapolis summer courses nobody met anyone outside of his class and his college. And this was a pity. Because if the others could only know him as he really was and understand that a man like him suddenly had become one of the professors . . . it couldn't help but hearten them all.

As the new professor stood thinking these altruistic thoughts, a small, dingy man with a worn briefcase full of books came past the Administration Building. Naturally the newcomer did not speak, but Mr Barnett, with an air which was so natural in the South that it did not seem awkward even in the North, passed the time of day with him and fell in at his side.

There was some brief reference to the heat and the prospect of rain to cool things off, before Mr Barnett introduced himself a bit more formally, giving his name and where he was from and also telling about the extraordinary honor that had befallen him.

"And you really were just picked up on the campus and placed in charge of a class because you have been successful in politics?" queried the dingy little man, pausing in his very rapid walk to look at the Southerner.

Mr Barnett would have taken this sentence for pure admiration had it not been for the phrase "just picked up on the campus." So he admitted with somewhat less ebullience that such was the state of fact.

"Well, it really all comes to the same thing," said the dingy little man, in a kind of moody thought. "You agree that you do not know any of their disciplines; the other professors only know their own and one or two others besides. It is impossible for any mortal brain really to comprehend all the university's curricula."

This appeared to be a point in Mr Barnett's favor, so he assented very heartily to that.

"So it seems to me," went on the dingy little student, "that the whole university idea is based, not on science at all, but on one of the most sublime and yet at the same time one of the most precarious acts of faith that has ever emanated from the uncriticized credulity of man."

Mr Barnett felt that as a professor of the university he should know what the man was talking about, but he didn't, and after a moment he said that he did not understand.

"You are not supposed to," replied the dingy man. "That is the theme of my dissertation,"—here he tapped his briefcase—"and it hasn't been published yet."

This relieved the Georgian considerably, and he asked with more confidence just what his companion did mean.

"My meaning is very simple," said the little man. "Here in the university we pursue many branches of inquiry, but nobody understands all of these disciplines. Nobody knows whether or not they are morally, socially or even intellectually compatible."

"Well, they're supposed to be," said Mr Barnett, not seeing which direction this conversation was headed. "All additions to truth are supposed to fit into the general body of truth and bless mankind. That's why the research men work so devotedly at their investigations."

"But that is a very broad assumption, that all knowl-

edge will operate for the benefit of mankind—and it's quite unproved."

"Why, you don't have to prove that—you would know that," ejaculated Mr Barnett. "How could knowledge help being beneficent?"

The dingy little man half closed one eye and looked fixedly at Mr Barnett as they walked along.

"A medieval man would have said, Mr Barnett, 'You don't have to prove the existence of God or that He is beneficent. Everybody knows that.' "

The Georgian considered the dingy little man curiously.

"Ye-es, I suppose that is true. Well, what of it?"

"Nothing but this: Your belief in knowledge, in science as a great beneficent body of truth waiting to bless man when he discovers it is nothing but the modern version of a great and beneficent God waiting to bless mankind when discovered. Both of these beliefs are acts of uncriticized faith."

Mr Barnett looked curiously at his companion.

"You will hardly get any of the professors to agree with you there."

"On the contrary, I think they are beginning to agree with me," said the dingy man, with a nod of his head, "—subconsciously, of course."

Mr Barnett began to laugh at the fellow for being an innocent.

"How do you mean, agree with you subconsciously?"

"By their pluralization of the word 'knowledge.' They now say 'knowledges,' as if one knowledge could be completely isolated from another knowledge, indeed as if one knowledge could be antagonistic to another knowledge. To me that is highly significant, Mr Barnett. It is the historical analogue of Luther nailing his theses to the door of the castle church of Wittenberg. It is the introduction of doubt as to the unity and beneficence of knowledge, just as Luther introduced doubt as to the existence and beneficence of God."

To the Southerner this was absurd.

"Why, you know, the professors have no such idea as that in mind!"

"Neither had Luther."

There was clearly no point in continuing a conversation with such a fantastic, and happily for Mr Barnett he found here a polite excuse for leaving the fellow:

"I beg your pardon, but there's a young lady sitting over there on that marble bench whom I know . . . if you'll excuse me?"

"Certainly, certainly," nodded the small man absently, and he walked on away, feeling in his briefcase to finger his thesis.

When Mr Barnett reached the marble bench he ejaculated in amazement:

"How in the world came you to be here at this time of day?"

"Well, the séance doesn't begin at once, you know."

"You were not waiting for me?"

"Oh, Meester Barnette—I can climb the steps verrie well."

At this a plan took form in Mr Barnett's head of not only lifting Miss Redeau up a few steps, but of holding her to him, of kissing her endlessly. She was like an exotic flower. She was much younger than he.

This exciting purpose recalled the new rapture of his academic appointment, and he told Miss Redeau about it. Her reaction to it left something to be desired.

"Politics, that ees a verrie funny theeng to teach," she observed.

"Well, it's a very practical thing." And he repeated what the dean had said on the point.

"I suppose you know lots of political treecks to get into office, yes?"

"I know some, of course," admitted Mr Barnett, not wanting to place his work on a basis of political tricks.

"Well, I hope you make them pay you verrie much mon-

nai for eet. Eet ees worth eet. Perhaps they take your treecks and beat you sometime; how do you know?"

"No, they can't do that. I live down in Georgia."

"By the side of that reever that you call Meester Chekolovsky by the name of, eh?"

This conversation, too, was growing depressing to Mr Barnett. He could not fancy why Miss Redneau should instantly have jumped to the conclusion that he was going to teach his class a lot of political tricks. And the mention of Chekolovsky was not pleasant to the Georgian. The Russian was such a huge, beefy, unripe, unmannerly fellow.

At the door of Psychology Hall Mr Barnett did not enter, lift Miss Redneau up a few steps and shower her with mad kisses of uncontrolled passion as he, and by a bare chance possibly she, too, had anticipated. Instead of that, he bade her good day and departed soberly for his room.

AFTER MR BARNETT HAD thus twice related the winning of his great honor and had observed, in both instances, the rather flat reception of the news, he went on to his apartment on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street in a somewhat dampened mood.

He walked along, thinking of the difference between Northern friends and Southern friends. In the South your friends rejoiced in your good fortune, but in the North it reminded them of other things, and the conversation would veer around probably to the last outbreak of Asiatic cholera, or the inflow of gold to America. It was a very impersonal place, the North was, and in time he hoped he would get used to it.

When Mr Barnett approached his number on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street he saw a taxicab standing at the curb. This fact, which would not have interested a born Megapolitan, set Mr Barnett speculating on what roomer in his boarding house was able to have a taxicab waiting for him at the curb.

As a matter of fact a very delicate contradiction was involved in this setting, because if a person were so down in the world as to rent a room in this particular house, he would hardly be sufficiently up in the world to have a cab await him anywhere. In order to rationalize what he saw, Mr Barnett decided that some roomer was trying to slip away without paying his rent. Only on some such ground as

that would the retention of a taxicab be a gainful outlay.

Just as Mr Barnett reached this cynical conclusion, Miss Lester and little Mr Derekson came out on the front stoop.

When the two saw the Georgian, Mr Derekson lifted a hand and said it was going to be a lovely evening. Miss Lester moistened her lips and explained they were going to hear a symphony concert and wished that Mr Barnett could come hear it with them.

Mr Barnett, somehow, felt quite blank at this development and asked if it were not early to start to a concert.

"We are firtht going to Giucucci'th for dinner and then go to a thymphony," went on Miss Lester, with a faint, regretful lag in her lisp.

"I hope you both have a very pleasant evening," wished Mr Barnett, a trifle too heartily, because, on this particular evening, with his great honor fresh upon him, he realized now that he had been looking forward to Miss Lester's warm congratulations on his tutorship and, no doubt subconsciously, to her caress.

"Oh, by the way," ejaculated Miss Lester, "there ith a young man waiting for you in the thitting room."

The fact that she had forgotten, even for a moment, so unprecedented a thing as a caller waiting for Mr Barnett showed that the girl, too, was quite excited by the situation.

"Yes, yes, thank you, I'll see him."

As Mr Barnett went inside and closed the door, the young man in the sitting room passed completely out of his head. His mind was occupied with the extraordinary fact that little Mr Derekson was taking Miss Lester to a concert. Not that he cared at all—in fact he was very glad for her, an unmarried girl, to attract a tutor in the university . . . he could have wished Derekson in a much better financial position if he were at all serious with Miss Lester . . . but then, of course, he had nothing to do with that.

He walked moodily upstairs with the girl still on his mind. He was not even aware that Miss Lester knew

Derekson. . . . Oh yes, yes, she had mentioned seeing him at the Medway party . . . yes, she knew Derekson. . . . Well, he was certainly glad for Miss Lester to have some other men friends besides himself . . . nice for her to have men friends who were unmarried . . . who were eligible for marriage. . . .

Here he tore his mind away from Miss Lester and placed it firmly on the collegiate work which he had undertaken. . . . He was going to lecture on practical politics to a group of college intellectuals. . . . He didn't believe that if Miss Lester knew that, and if she knew also how he had been treated by everyone to whom he had mentioned the matter . . . he didn't believe she would have gone off and left him like this. . . .

He put his mind resolutely on his lectures again and thought of them. . . . He was afraid he would have stage fright . . . talking about politics to a bunch of Northern intellectuals. He stood in his apartment and tried to imagine himself really speaking to a class in the university. . . . Would he be frightened? The Georgian tautened his will power and forced an astral class of Northern cognoscenti to assemble in his huge, shabby room. He looked down on them from where he stood with a kind of embarrassed emptiness. He had nothing to say to them. Then, in the midst of this mental strain of trying to produce both the speech and the audience, his telephone rang and quite startled him. It might have been hisses, or applause, from his class. He went to it, and the voice of his landlady told him that there was a young man waiting to see him in the sitting room. Mr Barnett was deeply apologetic; he begged her to send him right up.

A few minutes later, when he opened the door to a tap, he was completely surprised to see young Fargason Medway on his threshold.

"Well, come right in," he ejaculated, overdoing his cordiality to conceal his astonishment. "Glad you came. What have you been doing?"

"I don't want to take up your time," began young Medway in Northern fashion.

"My dear boy, I have the evening before me. I have just been appointed to deliver some lectures here in the university, and I was thinking what I would say."

"Oh, then I really will run along!" cried Fargason, beginning to back out the door.

"No, no, I mean by that that I am idle for the evening. I have nothing to do."

Young Fargason looked closely at his Southern adviser to see if the two propositions, having a speech to concoct and having nothing to do, actually meant the same thing. Apparently they did, so he checked his flight.

"Well, I'll be as brief as I can. I imagine you are perfectly sorry Father ever wished me on you."

"Oh no, no, just the other way around—very pleased. Sit down, sit down. You can look out my window. I haven't any big lighted bridge to show you, but the river boats have lights, and every little yacht has up a signal light—look like pearls in the shell of the sunset."

"Mm-mm—yes—very pretty. Uh—of course you know about me and Nancy?"

"Miss Casings?"

"Yes."

"You mean you two—er—being friends?"

"Yes."

Mr Barnett's caller was clearly embarrassed, and the Georgian saw that he was going to have to elicit any information he received by the ancient game of questions and answers. The most probable embarrassment which might spring out of an intimacy between a young gentleman and a young lady suggested itself to Mr Barnett's mind. He cleared his throat and began putting it as delicately as possible:

"Uh—er—I hope that—ah—neither one of you find yourself in any—ah—difficulty. . . ."

Young Medway colored faintly and nodded.

"Yes."

Mr Barnett shook his head slightly. He had been afraid of that. And he was certainly in no position to give young Medway the sort of advice the youngster wanted. Now if he had been in Georgia it would have been different, but up here in the North he didn't know anybody, he had no medical friends, and if he had known a doctor he would have been opposed to . . .

"And you want my advice about the matter?"

"Yes, sir," said young Medway, using the title possibly for the first time in all his rationalized life.

"Well——" Then more loudly: "Well—Fargason—I don't know what you think about it, but"—he sucked in his lips with a slight smack—"I advise marriage. I advise it because I——" He was on the brink of saying that he advised it because he had married under much the same conditions himself and it had turned out very well, but he changed this to the more diplomatic, "Because I think it's the right thing to do."

"Why-y—she won't have me," flushed the young man, a little at sea.

"She won't!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, greatly astonished. "Mm-mm, the pride of womanhood—the strange pride of womanhood! But you should insist. That—that, my boy, is a jewel which should not be taken away by any less than loving hands."

"But she's not even interested in marriage."

"She isn't!"

"No."

"Isn't—isn't she in—in trouble?"

"No, I'm in trouble," cried young Medway frankly.

"My Lord!" cried Mr Barnett, but on second thought he knew that that could not be, so he said:

"What do you mean, you being in trouble? Has her father, Mr Casings, found out anything?"

"No, no, it's nothing like that," ejaculated the young man. "It's just Nancy. I—I haven't seen her for days:

we haven't had a motor trip . . . I can't remember when. She—she's quit."

"Quit!" ejaculated Mr Barnett. "You mean she won't see you any more?"

"Yes, that's it, she's quit."

Relief spread over the Georgian. He had thought his advisee was in trouble, and here he seemed to be getting out of trouble—not that Mr Barnett really cared much about a Northern affair like this, but if he were advising the boy he would want to do the best he could by him. So he began in quite a different key:

"Well, what happened to her, what made her—ah—withdraw her affections?"

Young Medway sat frowning out of the window at the buses on the bank and the boats in the water. Finally he bit off his words:

"She's quit being radical!"

Mr Barnett caught his underlip in his teeth, bit it sharply and frowned in order that he might not betray an untimely emotion.

"Is that the trouble between you two—politics?"

"Yes," snapped young Medway, "but Nancy makes it carry everything else with it—companionship, normal sex relations, plans for a future marriage—"

"Oh, then you did plan a future marriage?"

"Yes, we thought we might if our mutual attraction continued. Neither one of us wanted to rush into a marriage that might land us in the notoriety of a divorce court."

Mr Barnett became not so amused.

"Now, you know, there is a sort of sense to that, Fargason."

"I should say there is!"

"But I don't see exactly why her coming back to conservative politics should upset—— But wait, I'll have to say right here, Fargason, that I approve of what she's done."

"You do!"

"Why, certainly I do. I'm conservative in morals and politics, but as I was saying, I don't see why her coming back to conservative politics should upset—er—any arrangement you two had perfected in—in—er—the physico-ethical world."

The young man nodded and thumbed the torn arm of his chair.

"That's exactly what I told her. I said, 'Nancy, you are mixing your logical categories.' "

"You told her that?"

"Yes."

"And what did she say?"

"She said everything went together—sex, politics, art, literature, music, philosophy——"

"Mm-mm," ejaculated Mr Barnett.

"Yes, she said it was all various phases of one interpretation of life. And I told her that was all hooey. I told her what she really needed was a logical language."

"A what?"

"A logical language," repeated young Fargason, with as much heat as if he were still quarreling with his sweetheart. "It is precisely such transpositions of sentiment and emotion in language that corrupt our reasoning processes. Every science, every department of life should have a vocabulary entirely its own so as to prevent any emotional or associational carry-over. She said the whole heart of literature lay in the emotional carry-over of words. And I said to her, 'Well, what sort of a life are you trying to lead, anyway—a life of logic or a life of literature?' Of course I had her in a dilemma there. If she had said literature, that would have been nothing but acknowledging sentimentality, and she wouldn't have been a Red. If she had said logic, then we could have disagreed on politics and perhaps arranged a—a meeting of minds on other things."

"I see. What did she say?"

"She didn't say anything, just got angry and wouldn't see me any more."

Mr Barnett pulled at his lower lip and then thoughtfully let it go. He maintained his gravity.

"Well, if we are going to effect a reconciliation—which, mind you, as a conservative I don't uphold—but if we are going to effect a reconciliation, we'll have to get at the bottom of the matter. Now—uh—do you know what caused Miss Casings to shift from the radical to the conservative viewpoint in politics—said shift carrying with it certain other rights, usages and hereditaments—without giving you thirty days' notice of the change?"

"This amuses you, doesn't it?" asked Fargason, stopping short in his confidences.

"Well, it's simply a big relief," explained Mr Barnett quickly. "I thought at first you really were in trouble."

"But I *am* in trouble. I'm in serious trouble."

"Yes, I know that, but to get back . . . What caused her to change her politics?"

"Well—Schmalkin," said young Fargason flatly.

"Schmalkin!" repeated Mr Barnett in amazement. "You don't mean to say she has taken a fancy to that——"

"Oh no, no, no. She simply said communism couldn't be right, starving whole populations to death to gain an economic foothold in the foreign trade. She said it was putting the system before the individual. I told her that was the whole idea of the totalitarian state, no matter whether it be communism or naziism or fascism. I told her the state always came first and that she had subscribed to the idea. She said very well, she would withdraw her support, that Schmalkin's tale had made her a conservative."

"And everything else that went with radicalism—she quit that, too?" suggested Mr Barnett delicately.

"Oh yes, everything, it all went together; that's like a girl—mixing her categories."

Mr Barnett sat looking out into the western sky which

had faded from mother-of-pearl to the dimly lighted blue that hangs by night over a city.

"Did—did you come just to tell me this?" he inquired at last.

"No, I wanted to ask you a question," said young Medway in different tone.

"All right. Shoot away."

"It's a personal question—it's a very personal question," hesitated the young man, "but I wanted to know what you thought. I couldn't very well go to Dad with it—a fellow's got to pretend to believe that his dad don't know about these things, and the dad has got to pretend that these things don't affect his son even if they do affect everybody else's son—really it's about the only way a family can get along under the same roof."

"I admit there is something to what you say," agreed Mr Barnett, becoming more dubious about his advisee's question.

"Well—all right. You are a married man, aren't you, Mr Barnett?"

"Mm—yes."

"You love your wife deeply. Now I'm not trying to throw off on you for being sentimental or sloppy or anything of that sort, but I just mean—you know—people after they have been married for ten or fifteen years, they just—you know—love their wives deeply and think nothing more about it. That's what I mean—nothing sentimental."

"That—that—that expresses it—more or less," agreed Mr Barnett, tiptilting his voice this way and that as he came sliding down through his admission.

"Well—all right. Up here in Megapolis where you can't . . . enjoy the company of your wife . . . what do you do about it?"

"What do I do about what—my wife?"

"Well—not exactly. You don't want to suffer from repression—any psychologist will tell you that leads to nerv-

ous breakdowns—and you know even the dentists say it makes your teeth decay."

"You don't mean it!" ejaculated the Southerner, who hadn't heard that.

"Yes, it's a fact," asserted young Medway warmly. "And more than that, if you don't go to the woman you love, you suffer—uh—from emotional incompleteness, which brings on deafness—and poor eyesight. So—what's a man to do?"

"Look here," proposed Mr Barnett, with an older man's uneasy responsibility for youth, "haven't you heard something about the sublimation of emotions; taking—you know—the nervous pressure off of your—ah—reproductive system and using it to advance yourself—say morally and intellectually?"

Young Medway held up a hand.

"Don't mix your categories. What's moral is moral; what's physical is physical. The thing I had in mind was this: Nancy is out of the picture, but—er—I do think she and I were—ah—physically in rhythm, if you know what I mean."

"I think I have your idea," agreed Mr Barnett uncomfortably.

Young Medway sat frowning slightly, staring out of the window.

"How much of that—that rhythm would you say was actual nervous vibration synchronized, and how much emotional sympathy?"

Mr Barnett made a subconscious protest by lifting a hand.

"I haven't the slightest idea."

"I—I wonder if there could be a substitution."

"What do you mean?"

"Well, Nancy's ditched me—through perfectly Victorian motives. There are other women in the world—and a man's got to protect his health. When your health's gone, all's gone."

"Now look here," protested Mr Barnett, "you can't mean that you are just going to run around——"

"Now, now, that was the very point I was trying to get at when I asked you how much you considered was pure mechanics and how much emotional sympathy."

As Mr Barnett again did not quite follow this, he simply sat looking anxiously at the highly involved young man.

"I think that could properly be one of the uses of the imagination," said young Medway, staring at his adviser.

"What?"

"Why, *that*. . . . Suppose a man was in the company of one girl whom he doesn't know particularly well and cares very little about, but he imagines very strongly that he is in the company of the girl who has ditched him. Now if—if a good deal depends on emotional sympathy—wouldn't that protect his health?"

Mr Barnett made a gesture.

"You run theory into the ground!"

"Oh, but wait, wait," cried young Medway, taking a fresh start. "All science is a greater and greater refining of theory—and this is important—a man's sexual life is one of the most important——"

"Well, it wouldn't be very polite—in company with one girl and imagining . . . Tchk!"

Young Medway lifted a shoulder.

"Well, after all, life isn't exactly a dancing master's class, is it?"

Mr Barnett agreed impersonally to this, and the talk drifted to other things—to only a few other things, thanks to Fargason's Northern instinct to economize time. Then the young man made a brief adieu and went his way.

Mr Barnett felt sick. He knew he had not counseled his advisee either wisely or frankly. But that had been impossible. An older man, in a case like this, is always kept more or less tongue-tied not only by inherited reticencies, but by the intricate social complications of the matter and by his own past.

AFTER YOUNG MEDWAY'S DEPARTURE, Mr Barnett sat in that state of sympathy and apprehension in which oldsters are so often cast by the antics of the young. He could not tell, from the young man's incoherent talk, precisely what he meant to do. Mr Barnett wished he could effect a reconciliation between Miss Casings and his advisee, although he considered Miss Casings' present line of action highly commendable. Still her reasons for breaking off with her lover were fantastic . . . because life was of a piece . . . because conservatism or radicalism ran through art, literature, morals, sex . . . an amazing line of twaddle.

As the Southerner sat on in the night he was glad he did not attempt to live by theory, but instead, produced from time to time, as best he could, theories that seemed to fit what he had done. It was a very comfortable mode of living . . . and it exercised the brain.

He was glad, too, that he had got to an age when he did not mingle sex with every other physical and intellectual interest in life.

No doubt, mused Mr Barnett, that young Medway and Miss Casings and Freud and all that youthful ilk are right; sex is indeed mixed with every movement of the human soul, but, after forty, men began to unmix them to some extent, fallaciously, no doubt, but they lived more equably in their error.

With a final thought of thanksgiving that he was no longer as young or as fidgety about reproducing the race as young Medway, Mr Barnett undressed and went to bed.

Once there, however, he did not sleep. He began thinking again of the lectures which he was scheduled to deliver. From here he drifted to the cynical indifference with which Miss Redeau had treated the news of his lectureship.

If that was the way Miss Redeau felt—and he decided that it was—he was through with her.

Not that the connection between them had been very close, but he was through with her.

He sat up in his bed and punched up his pillows. The lights shining in through his window kept him from sleeping. Lights from the buses and the steamers and the street filled the whole top of his room with beams.

He supposed that Chekolokovsky was with Miss Redeau at this very moment. He shook his head at the moral laxness of a great city. He lay down again and tried to go to sleep. After an indeterminate time he found that he was listening for steps on the stairs. He wondered ironically if Mr Derekson was going to keep Miss Lester out all night.

The street noises and the river noises completely banished sleep. If he couldn't go to sleep any other way, he thought, he would get up and read a book. He looked around in the beam-shot gloom to see if he could see a book . . . he yawned. . . . Just any book—he yawned again—would put him to sleep.

Sometime later something awakened him from what appeared to be about a five-minute nap. He lifted his head with a drugged sense of urgency and listened intently. All he could hear was the reduced sound of traffic on the Avenue, and by this Mr Barnett knew that it was later than he had thought.

He continued holding up his head with a good deal of effort, trying to hear again whatever it was that had awakened him. The rumble of an occasional bus along the Avenue, the lonely hoot of a river steamer, and from a dis-

tance down the bay the harsh, rather appalling note of a fog siren . . . so a fog was coming in and autumn was beginning early, as it did in the North. . . . Why, down in Georgia summer would laze around all through the fall months and would not take away the last green of her perfumed petticoat until along about Christm—— Here his ear caught again the faint tapping on his door that must have awakened him in the first instance.

Mr Barnett whirled out of his bed like an automaton and went across the floor, tightening and retying his pajama strings. He opened his door a little way and vaguely saw Miss Lester in an evening gown.

"I—I wath afraid you wouldn't hear me," whispered the girl uncertainly. "I—wanted to thay, good night."

"Well, that's sweet of you, it's darling of you," praised Mr Barnett, with the warmth of his bed around his body.

"I thought we would never get back," whispered Miss Lester, with a breathy sigh.

"What-all did you do?"

"Oh—we had dinner—and then the conthert—and then thupper—and then a night club—and finally we taxied back home. He jutht left me down there a minute ago." Miss Lester's voice sounded as if she had been through a tragedy.

Mr Barnett gave a whispered "Phew" at such extravagance. "Come in and sit down until you get sleepy."

"But you are already thleepy."

"Oh goodness, no, I'm never sleepy—just like Napoleon, wake me up in the middle of the night and I'm completely awake, and then—bing!—go to sleep the minute I touch the bed and give the command." Mr Barnett took her round elbow, drew her inside the ray-shot darkness and closed the door after her.

Miss Lester laughed a little.

"You really are a funny man. I'll venture it will take hourth for you to get back to thleep."

She went in with him and relapsed, with a sigh of relief, into the comfort of the ragged old chair. Mr Barnett found a precarious lodgment on its arm, with his hand on the girl's shoulder to express his sympathy for all she had been through. Miss Lester reached up and patted his fingers.

"What have you been doing today?"

"What have I been doing!" ejaculated Mr Barnett, in self-pity. "Do you know young Fargason Medway—tall, serious, addled-looking boy with a round red mouth that looks like an American Beauty rose that has gone on a strike and won't bloom?"

Miss Lester started to laugh but instantly stifled the sound, then she said, "I wish the night-club comedian had uthed a little more humor and a little less thmut. . . . You know, I think one of the reasons the people in Megapolis talk so much about thex is so they can listen to the night-club entertainers and feel at home."

"I think it's a shame—taking a woman out to such places."

Miss Lester laid her cheek softly against the hand on her shoulder in appreciation of her present moral safety.

"We don't approve of it in Iowa, either," she said.

They pressed together a little more closely, each feeling an answering thrill to their mutual austerity. The reduced night traffic flowed along the Avenue in an irregular sequence of lights. Beyond them the signals of the yachts still burned against the dull illumination of the sky. The air of mystery that brooded over the dark, reflecting water fitted their mood.

"What about young Medway?" queried the girl at last, coming out of her reverie.

"Oh, Medway—why, his girl has quit him."

"Quit him! Was it a serious case?"

"Mm-mm—I wouldn't want to say. I don't know that it was exactly a secret."

"Oh, nothing makes any difference here in the East."

"I suppose not. Well—they had gone—rather far, I think."

"Isn't that jutht like Megapolith!" Miss Lester gave a little shiver, and Mr Barnett moved his hand further around her as a protective movement against the wickedness and callousness of the metropolis.

"What made her do it?" inquired the girl, after a moment.

"Leave him?"

"Yeth."

"Well—they—fell out over politics."

Miss Lester lifted a hand and touched his face.

"Oh, Andy—no!"

"Yes, that was it."

Miss Lester pressed the hand that was around her waist.

"I don't know whether to laugh or cry. Aren't they the motht abthurd——"

"Oh yes, of course, they're young."

"Mm-mm." Miss Lester shook her head, and her hair tickled Mr Barnett's face and also gave out a kind of demure perfume which the Southerner did not know was there. "They shouldn't be turned looth like that—at their age. . . . If I had a child——" She drew a long breath that gently lifted and lowered Mr Barnett's hand.

"Oh, by the way," said the Georgian, suddenly recollecting, "I'm a lecturer in the university now!"

Miss Lester twisted around toward him abruptly.

"What? What did you say?"

"Yes, a lecturer on practical politics—in the university."

"Why, Andy—Andy dear—how in the world!"

In her amazement, in her enthusiasm and congratulations she made room for him, and he slipped down in the chair beside her, or rather so that she was more or less in the chair and more or less in his lap.

"Well—the dean—you know he—he can't quite give me a degree."

"No."

"But he wanted to do something to—to—certify me."

"Y—yes—uh. . . . Don't put your hand up there, Andy dear." She slipped her thumb under his forefinger and tried to pull his hand from her breast.

But the man put his other arm around her and pressed her face abruptly to his own.

"Why can't *we* love?" he gasped unsteadily. "Everybody—everybody else in Megapolis——"

"But Andy—Andy darling—we're not—from here. . . . Thweetheart! Thweetheart! Pleathe! Pleathe!"

She not only was in his lap, but he had arisen, holding her in his arms. He was walking across the room with her, showering upon her all the kisses and passion which he had many, many times before imagined himself giving to Marie Redeau.

IT SEEMED TO MR BARNETT a fitting turn of fortune that at this stage in his relations with Letah Lester, he should give up Miss Redeau entirely. His new work prevented him from seeing her. He could no longer attend Dr Fyke's laboratory of supernormal psychology on account of his approaching lectures. And even apart from that he felt it was the delicate and courteous thing, just at this point, to give up all other woman friends for Miss Lester.

Still, he could not avoid observing life's ironic twist in bestowing upon him a woman whom he did not quite desire in lieu of one whom he most ardently did.

But it was really a touch of Southern poetics that the Iowa girl should comfort his body and leave his heart wistful for one whom now, in all honor, he could never approach. It added just that touch of pensiveness and wistfulness to his urban nights and subtracted almost nothing from their satisfactions.

During this interval Mr Barnett haunted the various libraries in the university, seeking material to supplement his own rather meager experience in politics. On his way about the campus he often stopped at the marble seat amid the cannas. Its pale semicircle was now touched with a past, the flowers redolent of the French girl whom he had resigned.

A day or two after the lecture appointment a young

man appeared at the rooming house asking for a photograph of Mr Barnett. He turned out to be the journalism student who had written the articles in the *Mimic* and the *Review*. The picture was given, and later Miss Lester showed it to him in one of the metropolitan dailies over the inset:

Dr Andrew Simpson Barnett, Superintendent of Public Schools in Atlee County, Georgia, and one of the leading authorities on Southern folklore and superstition, has accepted the chair of practical politics in Megapolis University.

In the university libraries material on practical politics was neither very wide nor very edifying. There were a few lives of the Presidents and biographies of the three or four senators who had escaped the general senatorial oblivion which seems to befall the holders of that office. But all of these books suggested that the highroad to political ferment was honesty, integrity, loyalty and an unswerving adherence to the good of the American people, regardless of party, creed, section or political logrolling. The only practical good Mr Barnett got out of these books was by noting carefully the corruptions of the dragons which these political St Georges sallied forth to slay. But of course the careful, detailed unfolding of the books was not centered on the dragons, but on the heroes. It was rather like studying solar mechanics by analyzing the reflections from the moon.

One of the librarians, a Miss Carey, a fat, comfortable, middle-aged woman, assigned Mr Barnett a desk up among the book stacks themselves. This was a very dark place with an electric light, but it had about it a romantic atmosphere, as if all human knowledge revolved about him in the encircling blackness. The very stuffiness of old books added to this Faustian impression. Only two things prevented Mephistopheles from tempting Mr Barnett with all the intellectual treasures of the world; one was that if the Georgian read any book for more than fifteen min-

utes at a stretch he almost invariably went to sleep; the other was he could not learn the Dewey system of numbering and stacking the books. Miss Carey had to find for him everything he wanted, so that his darksome romantic seat amid the odor of learning did him no practical good except that his naps were undisturbed.

Miss Carey, however, when she learned what Mr Barnett really needed, was more successful. She brought forth the old muckraking books which gave some of the ruses employed by politicians to catch the popular vote. Thus rural politicians invariably stumped their districts in shirt sleeves. A certain senator always produced a torn handkerchief, mopped his face with it in the midst of his speech and then apologized to his audience for the carelessness of his wife. The mayor of a great city always carried around with him a cage of rats; in his fulminations he would call his opponents rats and hold up his cage to illustrate what he meant.

Now such devices, Mr Barnett knew, would be of real political value when the graduates in public service walked out of the university into the world as candidates for some office. But he became more and more dubious about standing on the platform of the great Megapolis University and teaching the undergraduates any such trickery. Eventually he went to Dean Overbrook and laid the matter frankly before him.

The dean visaed Mr Barnett's plans. He explained that the pretenses of politicians to democratic simplicity were the result of the single-class social foundations of American society. "It is no more hypocrisy," said the dean, "than a priest is hypocritical when he puts on the vestments of the Church to perform the services before the altar. Nobody believes that the politicians move through the halls of Congress in shirt sleeves and dirty felt hats. All this is but a symbol that the politician still adheres to the doctrine that all men are born free and equal, with equal rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

It is a symbol that he, in reality, is as low as the lowliest of his hearers. The question of good faith comes in when you inquire whether or not the politician really believes in his own symbol. If he does he is a virtuous man; if he does not he is a demagogue. You can teach that to your classes."

Mr Barnett sat nodding, completely put at rest by the dean's exposition. He was now quite ready to go, but naturally the dean would not so quickly turn loose a Southern man who had been trained to listen courteously to all that the most loquacious person had to say. So the old gentleman held up a finger to detain his caller.

"Now, as I say, shirt sleeves, torn handkerchiefs, flop hats are at present symbolic. They may become ritualistic. The farther any nation recedes from a given social reality, the more concrete must be the sign of that reality. The next step after symbolism is ritualism, or, that is to say, obligatory symbolism. Therefore I expect the time will come when the Supreme Court judges will ascend their bench, not in robes, but in overalls. The Vice President of the United States will tap for order in the Senate, not with a gavel, but with a corncob pipe. The senators themselves will debate, not with words, but with fisticuffs, and the last man to stand up on the floor will decide the fate of the various bills. It will all be a symbol that the will of the common people is the real actual force behind our government, and that symbol will be converted into a ritual because the assumption is no longer a fact and it therefore requires dramatization in order to be remembered at all."

It was one of the drawbacks to Mr Barnett's association with the dean that he never was sure whether the old gentleman was jesting or in earnest. It always forced him to wear that ambiguous, serio-comic expression, as if he had just heard a very tearful joke or a most amusing tragedy. It was really a strain, and probably was one reason why Dean Overbrook's conversation bored him so.

However, the talk heartened Mr Barnett mightily. He

went back to his room on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street with his brief bag quite full of books and notes and clippings which Miss Carey had collected for him. When he arrived he was surprised to hear voices in Miss Lester's room. He had meant to go in and salute Miss Lester with that delicately pensive kiss which a man places upon one woman's lips in memory of another, but since she had company he went into his own apartment.

He had been there only a very short time when there came a tap at his door and, of all persons, Mr Schmalkin entered, bringing him a cup of tea. It was flavored with vodka. Miss Lester had heard him come in and had sent in the tea and a caviar sandwich.

It turned out that Mr Derekson and the Russian had dropped in on Miss Lester and had brought with them the caviar and the vodka. Presently both Mr Derekson and Miss Lester appeared with their tea and sandwiches. They had shifted to Mr Barnett's larger apartment because it had air and light.

They all began talking about their work and, presently yielding to a touch of bonhomie and the flavor of the vodka, Mr Barnett read aloud some of the notes Miss Carey had gathered and which the dean had approved.

Mr Derekson and Miss Lester went into gales of laughter at the material the instructor in practical politics was about to give his classes.

The Russian, however, remained grave. He said the mimicking of class costumes by politicians was effective only so long as the political fight was a fight between persons and not a fight between policies. "Today two social forces are struggling in history, the proletariat and the capitalist. But mind you, no matter which wins," went on Mr Schmalkin, "you will have the same general set-up of great masses of men serving the few. The difference will be in the few. The proletarian few will be motivated by the machine ideal and machine economy. The capitalistic or fascist few will be motivated by war ideals and war econ-

omy. The masses under either regime will be used in much the same way. But here is the difference: the ritualistic costumes of shirts, hats and torn handkerchiefs will be discarded by communistic or fascist politicians, or any politician who rules by overt force. The beggar disguise," concluded Mr Schmalkin, "is the undercover man's tribute to the potential or the vanished political power of the masses."

Mr Schmalkin said very little else during his visit. It appeared that a Russian ship was due in port within a month, and that a ship from his homeland always aroused a nervous tension in the exiled scientist, a kind of nostalgia, no doubt, for the country he would see no more.

Later Mr Derekson and Miss Lester went out to a theater or some such entertainment. Mr Barnett divined how this would react on the girl from Iowa. When he went to bed that evening he propped his door slightly ajar and left the hall light burning dimly in order not to place Miss Lester in jeopardy of being overheard by a suspicious landlady when she tapped at his door.

He dropped off to sleep with anticipation of being charmingly awakened at a later hour. When he actually did awake it was eight o'clock in the morning. When he got up, blinking and a little surprised, he went to his door and found that during the night someone had closed it and snapped its spring lock fast.

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ETHER OR NOT THE CLOSING of his door was performed by Miss Lester and was meant to be symbolic, or whether the landlady, in her rounds, did it to safeguard the reputation of her house, Mr Barnett never inquired. All that he knew surely was that Miss Lester's favors never returned.

At the Iowa girl's quiet withdrawal of herself, the Georgian through the following days should have been lonely. He perhaps was lonely, but like the vast majority of urban dwellers, his solitariness was so overlaid with a film of incident and impersonal contacts that he hardly realized it. He grew nervous and a little depressed, unaware of the ironic contrast between his inner and outer worlds.

The particular work that absorbed him was, of course, the preparation of his approaching lectures. He knew nothing of lecturing, and in seeking a model to imitate he went to hear a lecture on medieval art.

The professor appeared with a great bundle of mimeographed notes which he distributed among his class. He talked rapidly and impersonally for precisely fifty-five minutes, then gathered up books and papers and was gone. Such a procedure dismayed Mr Barnett. He knew that he could never recede to so remote a distance from any group of students as this professor did.

When the great adventure of his first lecture arrived, Mr Barnett drank two cups of coffee for breakfast and omitted his eggs and toast in order that the work of digestion might not cloud the issues in his brain.

When he packed his briefcase with the notes and clippings that were to form the substance of his first lecture, it felt so thin and flimsy in Mr Barnett's hand that he added the notes of his second and third and fourth lectures until his bag rounded out into something nearer collegiate form. With that much material, he hoped he would not run utterly dry of anything to say within his first period.

The university buildings, which, on the day the Georgian received his appointment, had seemed pavilions of honor, now changed to intellectual fortifications against which he advanced with dwarfish armament.

There was something particularly daunting about the carved and recessed entrance to Social Science Hall. The elevators in all the buildings now were running, affected perhaps by the obscure reaction of the union and the public to the elevator man's suicide and murder of his wife. When Mr Barnett entered the cage he thought of this and in the same moment could not remember on which floor he was to give his lecture. He asked the operator if he knew where Mr Barnett was to lecture on politics. The fellow suggested that it was in the catalogue, but neither of them had a catalogue. And, besides that, Mr Barnett knew that it was not in the general catalogue. He was giving a special course, and it was announced in a little two-page folder. He began going through his briefcase in the hope of finding the folder. He glanced at his watch to see if he had time to rush to the Administration Building and get back for his lecture. He knew a girl at a desk in the Administration Building who would certainly know where he lectured, but he didn't have time.

Just then two women entered the elevator, and one of them said to the other, in the weary, enduring voice of one summer student to another:

"Who is this man Barnett, anyway?"

And the other one closed her dark-circled eyes that had been trained by university methods to gather the contents of a printed page at a single glance, then glance at another and another and yet another, hour after hour, day after day, month after month, through storm and sunshine, heat and cold, through autumn's gifts and the sweet call of spring, glancing swiftly onward from page to page, and she said:

"Don't know—never heard of him—never heard of any of these summer-term professors. . . . Seventh out, boy, please."

Mr Barnett followed the two up to Room 710 and found his class assembled.

The two women sat down at adjoining desks, produced books, pencils and pads from their briefcases and set to work in a businesslike manner. Mr Barnett looked around the room at the blackboards, one filled with algebraic equations, another covered with French sentences.

From the seventh-story window he could look out over some treetops, and at an angle he glimpsed his white curved marble bench in its circle of cannas. In the midst of his growing stage fright it struck the Southerner as humorous that within the few weeks of his attendance at the university he should have been elevated from a creditless adventurer on the marble seat to be a professor with a class before him.

To compose himself, and in order to inject into his hearers' minds the idea that he had something to do with the class, he walked over, took an eraser and began clearing the boards. As he rubbed and scattered a faint chalk dust over his face and clothes, more persons came into the room. Among these Mr Barnett recognized the two fat, black-haired boys who had stood in the Housing Bureau line and boasted what fine positions awaited them when they got out of college. None of the other students had he ever seen before.

The moment for the lecture finally arrived, and Mr Barnett made a mechanical start by handing out blank registration cards which the office had furnished him. As he did so he asked his class if any of them intended to run for a public office.

There was a silence at first, then a girl in the back end of the room lifted a hand and asked if they should write the answer on the cards he had given them.

"Oh no, no, I simply wanted to know which of you intended to run for some public office, and I wanted to ask the further question whether or not you had failed in something else."

The whole class was looking at him now, and two women and a man asked simultaneously:

"What do you mean, failed in something else?"

"Well, I mean, before you decided to run for office, did you work at some other profession and fail to make a living? I did. I ran a farm in Georgia. I was just about to have it sold from under me by the sheriff. I knew I had a lot of friends in my county, so I thought I would run for the Georgia legislature. In my campaign speeches I simply told them that if they would elect me it would save my farm."

Faint, somewhat uncertain smiles flickered through the group. The same girl asked:

"Are—are we to write that down?"

"No, you needn't write that down. You won't have any trouble remembering that."

"But—what does that mean?" asked one of the serious women, with dark-circled eyes.

Mr Barnett began frowning slightly. It had not occurred to him that everything he said, every anecdote he used, must have some directional meaning beyond the mere surface sense which the words conveyed. Happily, at this slightly embarrassing juncture one of the black-haired boys raised his hand.

"May I answer her, Professor?" he inquired in a thick voice.

"You may," nodded Mr Barnett, wondering what the black-haired boy meant to say.

The thick-bodied young man arose from his seat and began belligerently:

"The professor means that any candidate for a minor public office in this country is up against the stupid, sickly sentimentality that makes our elections an eleemosynary institution to give away small sinecures to the weakest, feeblest or the most dishonest and completely unfit men we have in our midst. Instead of using our small offices to train competent men to occupy our higher offices, we use these small offices to pension incompetents who cannot be trained at all. Thus we have a hiatus in personnel between our lower-office levels and our upper-office levels, with no hope of continuity in our American political development. That is what he means."

He sat down, and the second black-haired boy held up his hand and, before Mr Barnett could recognize him, had added thickly:

"That is why European statesmen are always ahead of American statesmen, they know the game from the ground up. . . . Isn't that what you meant, too?"

One of the middle-aged women who had shown Mr Barnett the way to his room lifted her hand.

"I don't really believe that is what you meant, Professor," she began earnestly. "I think you gave that example in an effort to show the difficulty that a properly equipped person would have in entering American political life when her opponent would make some personal appeal to the voter. I know myself that the term 'highbrow' is an epithet of opprobrium when applied to any political candidate. Now as to whether a 'highbrow' who had made a complete failure of his life would have sufficient qualifications to be elected over a candidate who had simply failed without making any effort at all—I don't know about that. I

am inclined to think the man who simply sat still and failed would get the nomination—it seems to me that that is probably what you meant."

From several students came shushes and requests for the professor himself to say what he meant, so they would know what to write down.

"Finish doing your cards," suggested Mr Barnett.

Everybody now started scribbling with speed, eager to get back into the argument and see just what Mr Barnett had meant.

A thin, trim, but somewhat weathered-looking girl finished first in the race and brought her card to the desk. As she laid it down she said:

"I think I have your meaning, Professor Barnett. You mean that our present capitalistic system of unequal distribution of wealth introduces an emotional and humanitarian factor of pity into our political elections that corrupts their efficiency."

The second woman whom Mr Barnett had seen in the elevator interrupted:

"I think Professor Barnett has brought out the extraordinary point that if no actual bribes were used in our elections, the sentimentalism of the people would still put incompetents and misfits into office. In other words the American people will always be governed either by nitwits or knaves."

Mr Barnett held up a hand.

"No, no, I didn't mean to say that—not in my first lecture."

There came a chorus asking him just what he did mean to say.

"Well," pondered Mr Barnett, "the first thing I meant is that if you are going to get elected you must make friends."

"What has that got to do with your farm about to be sold?" inquired the first black-haired young man.

"Well, the easiest way to make a friend is to ask for

help, and the quickest way to make an enemy is to show the man that you know more than he does. Now when you people run for office, it is all right for you to appear to know a very great deal, but if you can make your speeches in such a way that you cause your hearers to feel that you think they know even more than you do, you'll be elected —if it's a square election."

"Do you want us to write that down?" asked the girl on the back seat.

"Not unless you feel that it is worth writing down," suggested Mr Barnett amiably.

The trim, slender girl with the slightly weather-worn face smiled faintly as she placed her card on the table.

"I see you practise what you preach," she observed in an undertone.

The name on her card was Miss Evelyn Emmes.

IN THE COURSE of the class meetings Mr Barnett's group gradually lost that unexpected and faintly inhuman appearance of complete strangers and became acquaintances among themselves. This change was greatly forwarded when they learned one another's names.

The group felt, if they did not analyze, the magic of names, that mutual identification of one another through sounds. It produced an effect of completion, as if persons must be tagged with a noise really to be known by the eye. It prevented a kinematoscopic quality in mankind.

The most argumentative of the two middle-aged women was a Mrs Irene Tipsley, a widow from New Jersey. She was an ardent communist, and it turned out that her natural enemy in the class, one destined to irritate her with every phrase he uttered, was the heavy young man with curly black hair, Mr Jacob Emmanuel Kurstein. Kurstein was the youth who had announced that he was going to step into a very lucrative position when he was graduated, and who, therefore, upheld the capitalistic system. Within a period of less than three weeks these two attributed everything each other said respectively to "wishful thinking" and to "defensive thinking." These epithets grew more and more bitter, until Mr Barnett one day pointed out that all human thought fell into the categories of either "wishful" or "defensive" thinking. That no brain

was ever exerted save to gain some new idea or thing or to defend what it had.

The girl in the class who insisted on having everything written out in her notebook was Miss Evelyn Emmes. She pronounced it "M's." Mr Barnett told her one day that if she hoped to be a practical politician she should never write out anything, that the ordinary politician held office only by the grace of the forgetfulness of men, and anything that tended to prevent a complete oblivion of the past was a merciless foe to a politician.

Mrs Tipsley immediately arose and said that Mr Barnett's statement was true only under a capitalistic regime where politicians were forced to legislate for the benefit of one class but must keep up a pretense of working for the welfare of all classes.

No sooner was she seated than Mr Kurstein declared that the very essence of all political action was to equate the necessities of the present against the desirabilities of the future. That present needs were almost invariably satisfied at some expense to the future, so that no matter how a politician contrived to tide a nation over its present necessities, when the future finally arrived and brought up its bill of damages all past expedients seemed rash and ill-considered and in the name of humanity should be charitably forgotten. "It is not only charity," concluded the black-headed boy, "it is justice."

The great fault Mr Barnett found with his class was its owl-like seriousness. The Georgian was not accustomed to such an attitude. In the South no one whose property was not under the sheriff's hammer or his neck in the hangman's rope was very serious. But the reason for this was not far to seek. The South, Mr Barnett reflected, thanks to the planting and harrowing of its sense of humor during the Civil War and the Reconstruction, now contrived to find cause for loud laughter amid the most untoward circumstances. But the North, never having been relieved by a kindly fortune of all financial and material holdings,

still remained the solemn steward of the nation. And now this sectional trait was showing up in Mr Barnett's class.

Miss Emmes was an example. One morning she stayed in the lecture room after class and asked Mr Barnett when he would give his term examination. Mr Barnett suggested that the proper term examination for a class in practical politics would be for the students to get out and run for some office; whoever was elected, passed.

Miss Emmes was quite at sea.

"That doesn't follow academic precedent at all," she said soberly. "A lawyer gets his certificate before he tries a case, so does a doctor before he visits a patient; even a chiropodist must have his diploma before he can take out a corn. Now for you to suggest that a politician run and be elected to office and regulate the whole government, make laws involving the property and the liberty and the very life of every citizen in America without any committee or examiner in any way determining his fitness for such a responsibility, seems to me to be the most illogical feature of your whole course."

Mr Barnett was forced into a serious reply.

"Doctors and lawyers are different from politicians, Miss Emmes," he explained soberly. "If they pass their state and bar examinations that fact gives them prestige with their patients and clients, but if the voters should learn that any candidate had a certificate from a school of politics, that fact would condemn him. Nobody would vote for him. It is the result of the American passion for political equality. It is the idea of an equal right to vote transposed to mean an equal knowledge of how to vote. And by the same token, a knowledge of what law to vote for presupposes an ability to frame the law that is to be offered to the electorate. Therefore every American is not only a born voter, he is a born lawmaker, and no schooling is required."

Miss Emmes was faintly annoyed at Mr Barnett's Southern persistence in saying everything backwards. She

walked out into the hall to the elevator, moving her head slightly at every step, after the manner of a displeased woman, and arranging the contents of her briefcase. In her briefcase Mr Barnett glimpsed a book with a very striking dust jacket. The Georgian had no interest in that or any other book, but to divert her mind he asked what book she was reading.

The slender girl made a slight covering gesture.

"Oh just a—popular book," she said, swinging her bag by her side.

Mr Barnett was amused that a girl like Miss Emmes should be lugging around in her already stuffed briefcase a book of which she was slightly ashamed. It was a very unusual attitude in the North, and he tried to set her at ease by saying:

"You can hardly pick up a book nowadays that isn't a bit off color. In this age we take our exercise by watching baseball games and our love life by reading novels."

"It isn't a novel," said the girl, tacitly leaving the question of her own emotional life unresolved.

Mr Barnett became whimsically interested. In the South he would have perforce stopped where he was, but here in the North he had some leeway.

"Well, it can hardly be a book about what every young woman should know," he observed. "The domestic-science courses here in the university go so thoroughly into all the details of propagation, conception and delivery of ideas, both carnal and disincarnate, that there is absolutely nothing left for a young woman to know."

Miss Emmes looked at him.

"This book has nothing to do with sex," she said defensively. "I—don't take any stock in it really, I simply bought it to see what a serious professor of science would have to say about—" Here, rather than detail her childish curiosity, she simply fished the volume out of her bag and handed it to Mr Barnett.

The Georgian turned the volume over in his hands and

saw the title on the jacket, *Will You Live After Death?* by Myron Fyke, Sci.D., LL.D., Ph.D., Litt.D. He opened the volume at random, and the first thing he saw was a picture of Miss Redeau in her robe, her hair a dark nimbus behind her madonnalike face.

It awoke a whole complex of memories and emotions in the Georgian. It seemed to him as if his association with the French girl were in some lost and irretrievable past. He felt as if there were no way for him to break out of this professorship which encompassed him and return to a point where he could again lift the girl in his arms, the cool, complaisant, remote body of Miss Redeau.

"As I say," repeated Miss Emmes a little shamefacedly, "I take no stock at all in such old wives' tales—a man I know, a Russian by the name of Schmalkin, asked me to read it."

"Schmalkin? I know Schmalkin," said Mr Barnett.

The two were surprised and somehow a little drawn together by the fact that they had a mutual acquaintance among the twenty-seven-thousand-odd students who attended the university.

"Mr Schmalkin told me to read it and see what logical extremes scientists will go to in order to preserve the spiritual direction of the historic present."

Mr Barnett fell to laughing as the two walked out of the door of Social Science Hall.

"Does that mean anything at all to you?"

"No—not now."

"What do you mean, not now?"

"Well—every great thinker invents his own vocabulary. I don't know whether Mr Schmalkin is a great thinker or not, but I do know that he has invented a vocabulary, and it makes sense when you listen to him."

"If I were guessing," said Mr Barnett, "I would guess that Schmalkin is a great feeler. I think he has been trying so long and so hard to rationalize the tragedies in his life that he has reached the fringe."

"You mean of course . . ." Miss Emmes touched her head.

Mr Barnett assented with a slight gesture.

"The trouble is," said Miss Emmes, "that nobody knows where lunacy begins and reason leaves off. I have thought myself that Schmalkin was a little cracked, then I have thought again, perhaps that crack is something he sees through just a bit further than I do, that when I think he is insane, I am blind."

"That's charitable," commended the Georgian.

"If you would like—if you have nothing better to do," suggested Miss Emmes, after a moment's hesitation, "you might come along and lunch with me and Mr Schmalkin. I'm on my way to meet him now."

"That would be very pleasant. Somehow I like Schmalkin. I believe I will, if I won't be in the way."

The two went along to the restaurant where Miss Emmes was to meet Schmalkin, and in about ten minutes he entered, looked around and came to their table. He seemed fairly well pleased to see Mr Barnett.

He shook hands across the dirty linen with a Russian flourish and began laughing in a dry fashion as he took his seat. He told them that a group of the professors in the Faraday laboratory had just invented something that ought to prove very profitable for the university foundation. "It's a safety-razor blade," he concluded.

"One that will last forever?" inquired Mr Barnett at a guess.

"Oh no, just the opposite, it is a blade that will give one perfect shave and then break into pieces when it is taken out of its holder. That, you know, is what the safety-razor manufacturers have been seeking for years, a blade that will be destroyed by a single shave. It guarantees production, labor, profits, it guarantees all the things desirable under the competitive system, and avoids the one undesirable thing, and that is, length of use. It is characteristic of the capitalistic system to expend great ingenuity in in-

venting weakness, to change styles, to cultivate waste."

Miss Emmes drew out her new book and laid it on the table.

"I'm a trades-union advocate myself," said the girl, paying no attention to the book she produced, "and while it may be wasteful in a way, still to progress is to change."

Mr Schmalkin took out a pencil and drew an almost perfect ellipse on the jacket of the book. He moved his point around and around the figure as he talked:

"There you are—an ellipse—the figure of the earth's movement around the sun. What direction in this curve is progress and what direction is retrogression? Or you sit in an automobile and whirl around and around a race track—you go out, you come back—but you progress all the time because the wind blows in your face."

"What you are saying, Schmalkin," observed Mr Barnett, "makes a kind of Russian sense."

The scientist picked up the book on which he was marking. "Here—here is another example of progress—of the wind in our faces. This book describes men as soulless—"

"I thought it was on the side of the angels," interrupted Miss Emmes.

"No, not at all. Its catch phrase dangles like that, but that is all; it is a worm on a hook. This book describes men as soulless—they are nothing but machines of meat and bone that may be moved about like chessmen—or traded for wheat—you can trade beef for wheat; it's not illegal."

"Now, Mr Schmalkin," said Miss Emmes comfortingly, and she stroked his hand on the book.

The small man with the great lined forehead looked at the waiter who was serving the plate lunches and said, "I'll take beer with mine." His two companions ordered. Presently he began again more composedly:

"Now it might be like this: We are what we think. Our collective mind is centered on machines. When man did his work with animals he felt compassion for his tools and so became an animal himself, like a cow licking her calf, or a

mare suckling her colt, but when he does his work with machines any compassion for his tool is waste. It has no feeling, it can be replaced. Pity, kindness, love, everything is out of place in a machine except efficiency. Man becomes what he thinks. This book proves to you that men factually are machines of flesh and blood. It proves what everybody believes—all books do that. And because we believe it, it is true. We are machines. Our souls have evaporated under our thought. This ellipse, it goes around and around—men rise out of the dust, they grow into animals and then into men, then they think themselves into machines and return to the dust again, but it is progress because the wind of time blows in our faces."

"Well, anyway, we have a very fine new safety razor that will break the first time anyone uses it," suggested Miss Emmes cheerfully. "Did you help invent it, Mr Schmalkin?"

"Oh yes, yes, I helped invent it—it becomes the property of the university."

WHEN THE RUSSIAN finished his lunch and left Mr Barnett and Miss Emmes once more to themselves, the girl hazarded, with a concerned face, that probably a ship from Russia would arrive in port soon.

"You mean from the way he was talking?" Mr Barnett nodded toward the door in the direction Schmalkin had gone.

"Yes, I think he becomes a little excited when he is reminded of the past. I am sorry now I showed him this book. It was bound to bring up in his mind the question of human life and death. And the fate which his own people met made—you know—a sort of bookkeeper's trial balance out of the loss of their lives and the gain to their country." Miss Emmes tapped a fresh cigarette on the table and drank off her stein of beer.

"Well—what do you think about that?" inquired Mr Barnett curiously.

"Oh, if—mind you, I say if—souls exist, then the whole philosophy of communism and fascism can't be right: people cannot exist for a state; states must be a mere phase in an endless development of individuals. Of course that idea formed the dissolving power of the early Christian religion. . . . Well, I'll see you again." Miss Emmes accepted Mr Barnett's match, drew a satisfied inhalation of smoke, got up from the table and went her way.

This lunch was the beginning of a comradeship between Mr Barnett and the thin, rather weather-worn girl. They fell into a way of leaving the lecture room together, and sometimes they would go to the marble bench in the circle of cannas and talk on and on, with their faint feeling of difference as man and woman lending its kindness to the conversation.

Occasionally Mr Barnett thought how unfortunate it was that Miss Emmes was not physically more attractive. But then, he reflected, women came like that: if their thoughts were deep, their bosoms were shallow; if their imagination was sensuous, their forms were not. There was perhaps some sort of equation controlling these factors and directing the human species along its predestined course. Well, it all made no difference to him, a married man, who presently would return to his home and to his loved and loving wife in Georgia. . . .

One day on the marble bench Miss Emmes mentioned to her political instructor that she intended to run for office.

Mr Barnett was surprised and asked her where she would make her race.

"In Local 952 of the Garment Workers' Union," she said.

Mr Barnett was amazed and said that was not politics at all.

"No-o—not now, but it is beginning to be. It will become so more and more."

"What kind of an office will you try to get?" inquired the Georgian.

"Field secretary."

"Why do you want to be field secretary?"

"Mm-mm—think I might do some good."

"Why, my Lord, Evelyn," cried Mr Barnett, "I never heard of a politician running for office because he or she thought she could do some good. Besides that, do who some good?"

"The labor unions."

"You are not a garment worker, are you? Why do you want to do them good?"

"No, I'm not, but it's part of the labor movement."

"But why does a girl like you want to get into the labor movement at all?"

"Mm-mm, because communism is too far off and the labor movement is right here knocking at our door."

"But labor!" protested the Southerner. "Why don't you stick to your own class? After all a class is a class. Each one gets what it can. If you are going to be a politician you don't want to hook up too closely with any class."

"But, Mr Barnett, you have to stick to the cause you think is—"

"There isn't any right—there isn't any cause that's right. A politician's job is to keep all classes working together in one way or another. And a successful politician always rides the top party."

"And has no loyalty at all!" ejaculated Miss Emmes, between shock and amusement.

"That is loyalty to the state at large," returned the Georgian, "because, as long as the top party stays on top, your government is necessarily stable. But if your party is beaten and you jump to another party and still stay on top, that is the highest loyalty of all, because, in the midst of change, you at least maintain, in so far as in you lies, a stability of personnel."

"Stability of personnel!" Miss Emmes began laughing.

"Certainly, stability of personnel. Protect the people from too violent a rupture in their institutions."

Still laughing, Miss Emmes declared Mr Barnett had been a very fine influence for her and the whole political group. Then she got up and started for the Avenue to catch a bus home. Mr Barnett called after her:

"Say, with all the labor disturbances, is it safe to be a field secretary?"

"How do I know?" she smiled back at him. "I've never been one."

Later, as the girl hailed a bus and threw away her cigarette preparatory to boarding it, she thought to herself:

"What a professor! But . . . he makes for efficiency . . . he's the sort of man people elect to office . . . and he's realistic."

And she felt there was something really friendly and attractive about Mr Barnett's semireligious and completely nonmoral personality. She liked him.

As for the Georgian himself, he could not understand Miss Emmes. Why should any girl in comfortable circumstances become a partisan to the cause of labor? And why the Garment Workers' Union? She accepted her hairdresser, her mechanic, her plumber, her chauffeur equably enough—why raise a great emotional disturbance over the people who made her coats and suits? He put it down to her physical unattractiveness. Women who could not attract men swung off on some compensatory tangent. He dismissed the topic from his mind.

But in the middle of the night he awakened in his room, disturbed at the thought of Miss Emmes becoming a field secretary. It was a very hazardous position amid all the present-day strikes. As he lay in his bed he could see Miss Emmes very distinctly among the changing light rays in the upper part of his room. Now if he were at all superstitious, he thought, he would imagine this half-fancied, half-drawn image was a ghost, because he could really see her quite clearly. Then a somewhat disconcerting notion came to him that it might be a sign. Mr Barnett rather believed there were such things as signs. There were mysterious connections between distant places and widely separated events. If he saw Miss Emmes it could easily mean that Miss Emmes was in trouble. It was not her ghost at all; it was indeed nothing supernatural; it was just a sign.

Several times during the week Mr Barnett thought of this odd experience, and he determined that at the next meeting of his class he would tell Miss Emmes both what he had seen and how he had interpreted it. Then he became

uncertain whether he should tell her or not, because she might think that he was a convinced believer in signs, which he was not at all. He was just like everybody else: when he saw something that looked as if it might be a sign, he steered around it instead of barging on through and probably meeting misfortune. He would attempt to explain to Miss Emmes that he was just as skeptical and materialistic as she was herself, but that he regarded signs on precisely the same basis that he took out his life-insurance policy, so if anything did happen he would have the benefit of it. He would advise her to do the same thing.

At the next meeting of the class in practical politics Miss Emmes was absent. This fact disorganized Professor Barnett's lecture to a remarkable degree. During the first half-hour he kept momentarily expecting to see the door open and Miss Emmes appear. When it became certain that she was not coming, the vision which he had seen of the girl during the preceding week came back to him with serious significance.

Finally he inquired if anyone in the class knew anything about Miss Emmes. No one knew. Nobody had the slightest idea of where Miss Emmes lived, what she did or why she should be absent.

Mr Barnett was lecturing that morning on election watchers, the points they should watch about the ballot box, how to prevent it from being stuffed, the tricks used to stuff the ballot box and the general technique of determining the will of the great American people. In the midst of this he broke off to ask if any of his class knew anything about a garment workers' strike in or near Megapolis. With a few more questions and answers Mr Barnett developed to the class that Miss Emmes had meant to become a field secretary in the Garment Workers' Union and that he was rather uneasy about her. He expected his anxiety to spread over the class at least in a polite degree, but they remained perfectly impassive, pencils in hand, ready to write in their notebooks. Later, when the class

was dismissed, Mr Barnett heard Mrs Tipsley say to another woman that the teacher-pupil relation should be kept completely impersonal, and cold. That it was not fair to the other students to have the teacher worrying over any particular pupil. That today the whole group had practically lost a lesson which they had paid good money for.

In the earlier part of his teaching Mr Barnett would have been shocked at such a sentiment, but by this time he paid hardly any attention to it. It was simply Mrs Tipsley speaking.

When he got out of the building he bought a newspaper and began looking for a garment workers' strike. The paper offered quite a wide list of strikes to choose from. Mr Barnett went to the marble bench and began going through it column by column.

His worst apprehensions were somewhat allayed because there was no garment workers' strike on the first page . . . probably nothing serious . . . He kept turning through his journal . . . then on the eighth page he found about a third of a column given to a garment workers' strike in Reading. The professor of practical politics skipped down the story apprehensively; then he saw why the strike had gained so little publicity. In a three days' wrangle between strikers and strikebreakers there had been only one man killed, two women sent to the hospital and three to jail.

Mr Barnett sat on his white curved bench with an empty feeling. Only last week he and Miss Emmes had been talking on this very seat, and now she was in Reading, Pennsylvania, in a hospital or in jail.

The anxiety Northern women must give their men went over the Southerner in a wave of resentment. He had told Evelyn Emmes that it was a dangerous thing for her to have anything to do with those damned . . . Well, by George, he was glad of it . . . served her . . . Then, amid this personal triumph, he began turning through the paper again, looking for the airplane schedules . . .

Airplane . . . airplane . . . here it was. . . . This was Monday . . . he could get to Reading, Pennsylvania, in three hours. . . .

At least he knew that Miss Emmes was not dead. She was either in the hospital or in jail. Here his mind fell naturally into the groove of practical politics. He could telephone his congressman from Georgia to get in touch with the congressman from the Reading district in Pennsylvania, and have that congressman get in touch with the mayor of Reading . . . and get her out.

He was up now, walking rapidly toward the Avenue, where he hailed a cab. The thought of Miss Emmes running away, trying to protect herself and being clubbed by pursuing policemen, filled Mr Barnett with a rising wrath and horror. He could see her falling down, stunned, her scalp split by the club and her pretty hair soaked. . . . He rushed upstairs to his room, thinking, "What a country . . . what a hell of a country!" meaning the North.

As he began throwing things in his bag he thought of the registration cards he had collected from his pupils at the beginning of his class. He had never glanced at them after that first day, but they were piled in his closet. He went to them now, picked out Miss Emmes's card and found her address and telephone number. He rang up the number, and some woman answered. The woman said that Miss Emmes was not in, but would Mr Barnett leave a message?

The Georgian finally drew out the information that this woman was expecting Miss Emmes's return that evening. Did she know that Miss Emmes would return? The woman was certain of that fact. Would the woman have Miss Emmes telephone him at once the moment she reached home? The woman would deliver his message, but as to whether Miss Emmes would telephone him or not she could not say.

As a matter of fact the telephone conversation became

almost acrimonious before it was ended. When Mr Barnett finally hung up his receiver he had very little faith that the woman would deliver his message at all.

But at any rate Miss Emmes was not in a Reading hospital with a cut scalp. At some time later Mr Barnett's telephone rang, and when he answered it Miss Emmes's voice asked in surprise if he really had asked her to call him. Mr Barnett was greatly relieved but just a trifle embarrassed, and he said that he had missed her in class that morning.

"I was out of town," explained Miss Emmes in astonishment.

"Yes, so I gathered. . . . I just wanted to know if you were all right."

"Certainly. Why shouldn't I be all right?"

Mr Barnett laughed at the rather absurd position into which his fears had maneuvered him.

"Listen," he suggested, "it's a rather long story. Are you too far away to come have dinner with me?"

"No-o—and I am pleased with the invitation and all that, but I can't imagine——"

"Well, you just come on and meet me at"—he pondered where to take her—"at the Noodle Shop in half an hour. I want you to know what a terrible scare you gave me."

"Scare? I scare you? . . . Well, all right, I'll be at the Noodle Shop in half an hour."

When he replaced his receiver for the second time, Mr Barnett sat in his room thinking that the Noodle Shop was by no means so stylish as Giucucci's on the Mall, where Mr Derekson had taken Miss Lester. But then, to tell the truth, Miss Emmes was not as comfortably proportioned as Miss Lester, nor as pretty. And so . . . he invited Miss Emmes to the Noodle Shop!

It really was a shame the way a woman's pleasures and opportunities and whole career in life depended upon her appearance. There was such a bitter injustice about it;

because a girl lacked perhaps some very small factor in pleasing, the whole masculine world passed her by.

Here he broke off this train of reflection as he got himself into fresh linen and a dark suit and began thinking about Miss Lester. She no longer kissed him when she went out in the mornings, merely called good-by through his panel in a voice which she maintained as best she could at its old-time heartiness. Well, if she was making progress with Derekson, which he supposed she must be doing, he didn't blame her for giving him up. After all, he was a married man. No Southern girl would do such a mercenary thing as that, but he didn't condemn any woman for doing the very best she could by herself in Megapolis. A man could hardly expect in the North the tenderness, the romance, the abandon to which he was accustomed in the . . .

The Noodle Shop was one of those characteristic university eating places of high-backed benches and chintz. When Mr Barnett reached the restaurant he found Miss Emmes already in possession of one of these tall semi-private seats.

As Mr Barnett sat down opposite her, the girl inquired with a puzzled, somewhat humorous expression what his excitement was about.

For answer Mr Barnett drew out the paper he had bought that morning and showed her the article on the eighth page.

Miss Emmes looked at him with an odd expression.

"Well, is that why you were storming at my landlady—you who seldom lift your voice above a blurred 'r' or an elided 'ing'?"

"I didn't know I stormed," said Mr Barnett.

"Oh yes, yes, very definitely you stormed. That was the first thing she told me—that some impolite hunky had been storming at her over the phone, and when she gave me your name I simply couldn't believe any of it."

"Well, where did you go to cut my class?" inquired Mr Barnett, rather amused.

"Up in Muskeatocky. I went to see my sister get married."

The Georgian lowered his hands to the table and looked at Miss Emmes blankly. He could not imagine Miss Emmes's sister getting married. She gave him the impression of being one of a long line of celibates.

"You know, it's rather an odd thing, you showing me that article," went on the girl, "because day after tomorrow I really am going to Reading to work among the strikebreakers."

Mr Barnett felt a touch of dismay.

"You are not going after this?"

"After what?"

"Why, me showing you this paper, and—— Oh say, there was something a great deal more important than the paper."

"I don't know what you are talking about, Mr Barnett," said Miss Emmes, becoming quite puzzled.

"Of course you don't. That was why I felt absolutely sure one of the women in Reading was you," and he went ahead to tell her of waking up in the night and seeing her image amid the half-lights in his room.

Miss Emmes sat for half a dozen seconds speculating on just how much Mr Barnett meant by this—what he meant consciously, how much he meant unconsciously. She was not very greatly surprised, because she knew that he was a married man for some length of time away from his wife. She thought to herself that the conventional thing for her to do was to become offended, but naturally that was pure nonsense. It was interesting, that was all, just interesting.

Mr Barnett himself sat looking quizzically at Miss Emmes.

"Well—doesn't that make you a—a little afraid?" he queried hesitantly.

This told her that he had meant it all consciously. She shook her head, with the faint smile of a completely armed woman.

"No-o—not in the least. Why should it?"

"Why—because—it's a sign."

"Yes, I know that," agreed the girl dryly.

"Well then, I think you are crazy to go!" ejaculated Mr Barnett in a full round tone, since his fear of being misprized as superstitious had been allayed.

"Just what has my going to Reading got to do with the sign?" demanded Miss Emmes, who naturally had been offended when she told herself that she had no reason to be offended.

"Why!" cried Mr Barnett. "It shows you are going to get hurt, you'll be arrested or wounded or, seeing you as clearly as I did, you may even get killed."

Miss Emmes stared at her companion, at first in a bewildered reconstruction of her entire premises.

"Why do you imagine I would be killed or anything like that?"

"The sign," explained Mr Barnett. "It wouldn't be a sign unless it meant some sort of bad luck."

Miss Emmes opened her mouth, then suddenly began laughing. Mr Barnett, who had no idea of the cause of her mirth, grew uncomfortable.

"You said yourself you thought it was a sign."

"But—but—Mr Barnett—what—what a cosmogony you possess! Every sign in it brings bad luck. Aren't there any"—she compressed her lips on another impulse toward laughter—"good-luck signs?"

Mr Barnett considered a defense of his position.

"Well, it seems to me—— But of course this is just my idyah."

"Yes?" nodded Miss Emmes affably, with all of her reserve quite gone.

He saw she was still amused, so he summed it up briefly:

"It seems to me that a—a sign is some sort of reaction of the nerves to something violent and dramatic enough in the future to—well, to send out a sign."

Miss Emmes bit her lips again and nodded slowly.

"I see, I see. So the—the generating cause of signs—somewhere in the future—would really have to be tragic, wouldn't it?"

"Yes, that is my idyah. I never had thought of it before, but that sounds reasonable."

"Then the question with me is," proceeded Miss Emmes, "how the exciting cause of a sign—my death, for instance—could make itself known to you before it happened."

"Mm-mm—I always imagine it's like a radio or a telegraph."

"All right. Then you think if I heed this sign and don't go to Reading my life will be saved?"

"Why, certainly it will. You know you can't die in Reading if you never go there."

"Very well, now look at this: If I heed the sign and don't go to Reading, then there is no approaching death to send out this warning sign. But if the sign comes and there is no way for me to avoid going to Reading, if it is predestined that I must go, then the sign is valid but of no value and might as well be disregarded. In other words, if the sign saves the person, the person can't save the sign, but if the sign does not save the person, then the person can save the sign. In either case, one or the other must be lost. You see that, don't you?"

Mr Barnett sat regarding his companion with a kind of humorous emptiness.

"That—that's all right," he agreed, "but it sounds a bit slick."

"Slick? How do you mean?" smiled Miss Emmes, with a woman's satisfaction in a man's discomfiture.

"It's too smooth—you make a speech like that before an election crowd and nobody would vote for you."

"Must I write that down in my book?"

"Be a good idyah. But look here,"—Mr Barnett could not get away from his demolished superstition—"a little while ago you said yourself that you believed in signs."

"I believed in—— Oh, you mean your waking up and —uh—seeing me in your room?"

"Yes. You talked at first as if you thought it meant something."

"Well, I used the wrong term. It wasn't a sign, it was a symptom."

"Symptom?"

"Yes."

"Symptom of what?" inquired the Georgian blankly.

The girl picked up her purse from the bench, feeling the general obligation in Megapolis to leave a restaurant as soon as one's dinner is eaten.

"That's a long theory," she evaded easily. "The waiters would chase us out long before I was through."

Mr Barnett arose with her.

"But you are not going to run off and leave me?"

"I don't know exactly where we can go." She glanced about the restaurant as if she might find some place.

"To a movie?" suggested the Georgian tentatively.

"No, no, not to a movie. Your talk is much better than shadows—it isn't so prearranged."

"I know what you mean by saying it isn't prearranged. You mean you got me into difficulties a little while ago, and you hope maybe you will again. Well, you won't do it. I'm watching you now."

They were out on the street by this time among the crowds flowing to the theaters. Miss Emmes took her companion's arm in order to keep up with him.

"That still doesn't say where we're going. . . . I would have you up to my room and make a cup of tea, but I'm two miles downtown and my rooms are terrible."

"I have a place that overlooks the Avenue," suggested Mr Barnett doubtfully, "but I don't suppose——"

"Why certainly, certainly," agreed Miss Emmes. "It must be a nice view, and besides, you owe me a consultation. You are my professor of politics. I'm going out into the world—you really do owe me a consultation."

As the two turned in the direction of One Hundred and Twenty-third Street, Mr Barnett felt a little odd at the simple innocence of his reception of Miss Emmes. In Atlee County nobody would believe in its harmlessness. . . . Here the Georgian turned his attention by force to what his companion was saying. She was telling him once more the reason for Mr Schmalkin's nervousness at their luncheon on the preceding week . . . a Russian ship was coming into port. . . .

But Mr Barnett already had heard that, and his mind came back to the matter in hand. He hoped that his landlady . . . and Miss Lester . . . would not see him come up the stairs with Miss Emmes. The landlady, of course, would think the most untoward things, and Miss Lester—he didn't know what Miss Lester might think. Possibly she might believe that he and Miss Emmes were seeking nothing more than a quiet place to talk; that they were simple friends, just like a couple of men . . . it was a relation that occurred quite frequently up here in the North. Everyone agreed that this was true. The only drawback being that nobody placed any credence in any specific instance of it. . . . Not that it mattered.

WHEN MR BARNETT opened the door of his unlighted apartment Miss Emmes exclaimed on the beautiful effect of the illuminated Avenue and suggested that they sit in the darkness and enjoy the view.

The Georgian switched on the lamps long enough to arrange chairs before the french window, then turned them off from the doorway and groped back to his seat.

The scene from his window was indeed freshened and made interesting by having Miss Emmes to enjoy it with her new eyes. As he sat down he happened to touch Miss Emmes's hand on the arm of her chair. It did not have the soft, inviting quality of a feminine hand, but gave the Southerner a rather neutral impression. Somehow it made him feel a little sorry for his companion. The fact that her sister had married on that very day came to the Georgian with renewed surprise, and he wondered if Miss Emmes herself had ever had a lover.

Aloud he was inquiring if she had finished Dr Fyke's book on the immortality of the soul.

"It isn't really on that theme at all," replied the girl. "Immortality is what you might call a point of reference —a negative point of reference at that. The book tells mainly about Dr Fyke's experiments with that woman—what's her name?"

"Redeau," supplied Mr Barnett.

"Redeau," accepted Miss Emmes, "and his explanations

of those experiments are rather hazy—tapping a universal pool of consciousness. What is a universal pool of consciousness? How does it work? This way of creating an enormous psychological mechanism to take care of a very small psychological phenomenon . . ." She gave over the point and sat musing on the lights.

The girl's observation almost answered a question that lay in the back of Mr Barnett's mind. He began to believe that Miss Emmes really was as detached and Platonic and sexless as she appeared. In her direct attack on Dr Fyke's book, she really meant what she said. An ordinary woman, sitting in the dark like this, would never really have meant anything she said. The talk of the usual woman would be a mere embroidery around her private musings and sensations.

"I happen to know the Miss Redeau Dr Fyke mentions in his book," observed Mr Barnett, thinking of what a difference there would be if Miss Redeau were here in his apartment instead of Miss Emmes.

"Not in the Biblical sense, I hope," said the girl. "I hear she is quite a tart."

Mr Barnett was a little shocked at this forthrightness. His first impulse was to say, "Oh, certainly not," but such a moralistic denial, while it would be quite proper in the South, would be ridiculous in the North. Then he considered telling Miss Emmes that Miss Redeau gave him the impression of a woman who handed over her body to the use of the world while she retained in her soul some inviolable keep. But this also, while it was perfectly true, sounded too sentimental for the North. Finally he did ask banally why women so objected to these light-o'-loves.

"It's because they break the connection between the present and the future," explained Miss Emmes. "It's a sacrificial connection. A woman, when she goes to a man normally, is really offering her good looks, her youth, long years of service and possibly her life itself, all for the sake of another generation who can never reward her and who

will barely understand her. It is probably the most quixotic sacrifice any human being ever made."

"Still, it is necessary if our civilization is to carry on," observed Mr Barnett, who was bored and faintly resentful of such moralizings from a girl who was sitting in a darkened room with a man.

"Certainly its necessity is what gives the feeling of tragic sacrifice to sex. Then when some light woman, as you call her, picks out the actual sexual act itself and deprives it of any significance at all, in a way she holds all creation up to lightness and triviality."

Mr Barnett gathered that Miss Emmes was very solemn over sex because she had no admirers.

"You yourself are not married, are you?"

"Oh no, certainly not."

"Well, are you engaged? Pardon my asking, but the subject we are talking about—"

"Oh, when we talk like this we draw on any information we happen to have. No, I'm not engaged to marry."

"Well, it seems to me public opinion ought not to hold a girl like you to precisely—"

"Oh, it doesn't. Public opinion has ceased to influence the instinct of woman. She can do anything she pleases if she can arrange it with this instinct that is in her. It has kept the race alive for millions of years, and it doesn't die all at once."

"I suppose not," agreed Mr Barnett, deciding that she was hopeless. He laid a hand on hers. "And it's a pleasure, Miss Emmes, in this day and time to meet a girl like you. But if a woman thinks so deeply over life, it is so hard for her to find a man she wants to marry."

The girl gave a brief, barely audible laugh.

"That's an extremely diplomatic way of putting it."

"Well, it's what I mean," and Mr Barnett patted her fingers.

"There is always a risk in studying the moral ideas of the different times," said Miss Emmes. "If you fall out

of step with your own times, why, then, you are out of step and nobody walks with you."

There was a certain pathos in Miss Emmes's saying this in a darkened room looking out on the intricate play of lights along the Avenue. The lights on the Avenue were innumerable; each one lighted somebody toward a happiness which was of his own time and generation. And Mr Barnett, who was bred in the same era of the lights, took Miss Emmes's neutral hand in both his own at this faint suggestion of feeling.

"Well, Miss Emmes, I wish I could tell you how I endorse everything you say. Really it goes to my heart. In the South we all feel like that, but I come up here in Megapolis——" He was moving her hand and forearm, up to, say, a little past the elbow, over into his own lap when his telephone rang. Mr Barnett paused. He looked around in the semi-illumination.

"My God," he said more to himself than to his guest. "I wonder who wants me now."

Miss Emmes took her hand back.

"You'll have to go see."

"Yes—I'll have to answer it. The landlady knows I'm up here." He did not turn on the light, because he knew certainly that a light would spoil his whole atmosphere, if this call did not.

"Hello! Hello! Who is this?" he inquired, with the barest impatience in his courtesy.

A girl's voice, quite close in his ear, asked anxiously:

"Is this Mr Barnett—who—who teaches politics?"

Mr Barnett placed his hand over the receiver and explained in a half-whisper:

"I think it's a new pupil for my class"; then aloud in the telephone: "Yes, this is Mr Barnett on Riverview Avenue. . . . What? Miss Casings? Well, what can I do for you, Miss Casings? Yes. . . . Yes. . . . I can see you. When would you like to see . . . Right now?" Mr Barnett was embarrassed. "Well, I'm afraid right at this

minute I won't be able to. . . . Where are you? . . . Oh, well, if you are already here . . ." He turned to look helplessly at his visitor. "She's downstairs."

Miss Emmes got to her feet.

"Listen, I'm the one who is in the way. You had no date with—"

"Shh!! Stay right where you—— Uh, Miss Casings, could you give me some idea of what you . . . Oh, Medway, Fargason Medway—he's not locked up a . . . Oh, sick—in a hospital. . . ." He stopped talking and presently put his receiver slowly down, then on a thought strode over and switched on the lights. "It's a Miss Casings, a girl I hardly know. She says she wants to talk to me about a friend of hers."

"I meant to have gone long before this," declared Miss Emmes.

Indeed, with the lighting of the chandelier she might as well have gone. They were suddenly resolved back into the Mr Barnett and the Miss Emmes of the classroom and the circle of cannas. And then the Georgian saw that Miss Emmes did not believe in the simplicity of Miss Casings' call. She gathered up her things with an air of feminine skepticism. At that moment there came a knock at the door. Mr Barnett opened it with a feeling of the futility of innocence. He begged of Miss Emmes:

"Now please don't go. . . . Come in, Miss Casings. . . . Miss Casings is here to consult me about her friend, Fargason Medway——"

"Who is sick and in the hospital," stressed Miss Casings.

"I mustn't stop you from going to see your sick friends," decided Miss Emmes at once.

"But she doesn't want me to go to see him."

"I—I'm afraid I do," put in Miss Casings, who seemed quite wrought up.

"But he has his doctors," pointed out Mr Barnett as politely as possible.

"I know that. I came to you because—because you are

a politician—and his adviser.” She was clearly on the verge of weeping.

“I’ll say good-by.” Miss Emmes offered her hand impersonally. “Hope to see you when I get back from Reading.”

“Good-by, Miss Emmes.” He shook hands with her and accompanied her ceremoniously to the stairway. He could see what she thought of him, and there was no way to explain anything. Nothing vital depended upon her opinion; still he didn’t want her to think . . .

He turned back to his room with the further discomfiting thought that Miss Casings, also, had leaped at a false conclusion. Indeed, when he rejoined her she was greatly disturbed over what she imagined she had interrupted. She began the most profuse apologies but said it was a case of life and death.

“But what’s the matter with Fargason?” cried Mr Barnett, with a more single-minded concern now that Miss Emmes was out of the way. “Is he in a critical condition?”

“Yes, yes.” Miss Casings really did begin to weep. “Let’s hurry, the newspapermen may be already there!”

“The newspapermen! For heaven’s sake, Miss Casings, what’s wrong with him!”

“Mr Barnett,” cried the girl desperately, “you’ll find out soon enough!”

They started through the hallway together.

“Where is he now?”

“At the Medical Memorial Hospital.”

Mr Barnett’s conjectures took a startled turn.

“He needs a politician at the Medical Memorial Hospital?”

“Yes. Oh, Mr Barnett, nobody but a politician can save him now!”

“Is he physically wounded?”

“Yes—yes.”

All Mr Barnett could imagine was a battle with the police. Fargason and this girl had committed another in-

discretion and had actually attempted to fight some officer. Now the young hothead was wounded, in the hospital and —in need of a politician to get him out. The Georgian shook his head.

"Has he committed a worse—er—*faux pas* than when —er—I went to see him the other time?"

"Oh yes, much worse. Only this time it—it really wasn't so much him who did it. . . . I—I did it."

Mr Barnett made a hopeless gesture.

"No doubt," he grunted, ungallantly perhaps for a Southerner, and the two went out of the rooming house together.

In the taxicab they rode almost in silence up the long crowded Avenue to the Medical Memorial Hospital. Mr Barnett stopped asking questions because Miss Casings obviously meant to tell him nothing at all. Instead of that she sat by his side, dabbing at her wet cheeks now and then with her handkerchief. The Georgian was so exasperated that he would have given his companion a strong lecture on the indiscriminate companionship of the modern young men and young girls, but the perfectly erroneous deductions which she undoubtedly had drawn in his own apartment estopped his very salutary observations.

"It simply shows," mused the politician bitterly to himself, "how careful middle-aged men have to be of appearances."

The Medical Memorial Hospital was a huge, amorphous pile of buildings that appeared shapeless by day and fantastic by night. Its wards and offices and operating rooms were so multiplied and superimposed in an endless succession laterally and vertically that only nurses and doctors grown up within its maze could find their way to any given point. Mr Barnett and his companion followed a guide through miles of corridors afflicted with the stench of utter cleanliness. At last they came to a door, knocked and opened it. Miss Casings looked in and ejaculated under her breath:

"Thank heaven they are not here yet!"

And Mr Barnett wondered, at a wild conjecture, if she meant the newspapermen of whom she had spoken.

The instructor in practical politics entered and looked apprehensively at the young man who lay in bed, not at all pallid from pistol shots but apparently quite well conditioned.

"Fargason, what in the world is the matter?"

"Thanks—thanks for coming, Mr Barnett," said the young man, in a strong but almost a tragic voice. "I was so thankful my adviser was also a social-science professor."

"You are not injured? You—didn't get in trouble with the police again?"

Young Medway held up his hand.

"Oh no, no, nothing simple like that."

Miss Casings, standing beside the door, began to weep audibly.

"Nancy, don't you think you had better leave the room? We don't want to mix up any sentiment with this."

"Well, have you sent for the newspapermen yet?"

"No, I haven't. I told you I would first hear Mr Barnett's advice."

"He's crippled for life," said the girl in an undertone. "Imagine me—crippling him for life." And she broke into sobs again.

"But I'm not—I'm not crippled for life. The doctors say that, taken in its preliminary stages, it is susceptible to a complete cure. If it wasn't for this fact there would be no reason for me to insist that we have wide publicity in my case. It will be the rising of the star of hope, Nancy, for hundreds and thousands of young men and women."

"It will kill you socially as sure as I'm standing here!"

"What if it does!" cried young Medway, sitting up in his bed. "Enough forward-thinking men like me will do away with the completely undeserved and harmful stigma that is attached to this disease. People will follow my example. They will come out in the open with it and be cured."

Why, today, in this very hospital, three babies were born blind. Now you want me to get myself cured hugger-mugger,"—he pointed a finger at his sweetheart—"instead of advertising to the world that I, also, contracted the disease and am bringing the well-known Medway name to make it respectable to call in a doctor and be cured!"

Mr Barnett was suddenly apprised of what had happened to his advisee. He was aghast. He turned to the girl, started to speak, but his Southern breeding held back the words. Then Northern complications forced him on:

"You—Nancy—you didn't——"

The girl nodded her head in despair.

"Yes—yes—I turned him away. I didn't realize that—he would go—somewhere else."

"That what you are feeling guilty about, because you—didn't——"

"Why, of course. I—lacked the imagination to see a boy's side of this matter. . . . He had to go off and try to protect himself from nervous strains—somewhere else."

"No, hush—hush. Don't cry any more. There—there are two schools of thought on this subject. There are some who believe that the young man should control himself——"

"But science will tell you unless you lead a normal life you make yourself subject to——"

"Well, then, you and he should marry and regularize——"

"Yes, but psychology will tell you routine is emotionally unsatisfying, that variety——"

"Listen," cried young Medway from his bed, "there is no use going over old stuff. Science has determined what is the good life. The question I brought Mr Barnett to settle is, Do I publish in the papers that I, Fargason Medway, am in the hospital and that I will be cured of this damnable disease in about a year and a half?"

Mr Barnett turned to the bedside. Finally he had reached the point of his visit to the hospital. The question

was so weirdly modern, so collegiately idealistic, that he did not know how to answer. Fargason began again:

"Of course Nancy, being a woman, is reactionary."

"I can see her side," mollified Mr Barnett. "A woman is naturally careful of her husband's name—that is, if you all should ever decide to marry."

"Yes, we intend to," cried the girl. "I'll wait the year and a half till Med's well—"

"But, darling," interrupted the youth, "that will be a long time for you to wait. You can contract neuroses, suppressions, antisocial reactions—"

"Med, honey, if I hadn't been the cause of this I wouldn't wait, but it's a proper penance."

The young man held up a healthy, sun-burned hand.

"For God's sake don't go medieval!"

"The point is," began Mr Barnett, "whether or not Fargason shall publish news of his malady in the papers?"

"Yes, that's it," wavered the girl. "Oh, Med, why do you want to do such a thing!"

This set the young martyr off.

"Why do I want to do it? Ask that, with one tenth of the young people in America afflicted with it and all ashamed to go to the doctors! Somebody's got to make a start! Some man of undoubted respectability has got to come out in the open and lead the way. He must tell the world that he's got it and it is nothing but an incident of life, like the measles. Maybe other well-known persons will follow my example. Bankers, senators, great financiers may publish in the society columns that they were in the hospital during the week end for treatment of the social disease. If they did that, in no time the disease would become respectable. It might even get to be a fad to be cured, just as it's a habit now to contract it. And just think of the insanity, criminality, congenital diseases, imbecility, pauperism and half-dead lives it would prevent, just to make it respectable to cure this disease!"

Young Medway was quite stirred up. He shook his hand

at the politician. "Mr Barnett, I have a well-known and honorable name. Why shouldn't I use its prestige to initiate a great national reform?"

For once in his life Mr Barnett did not know quite what to say.

THE SOCIAL RICOCHETS of this world amazed Mr Barnett. Stalin starving a million peasants in the Ukraine, driving Mr Schmalkin, a misanthrope, out of Russia. Schmalkin's story shocking Miss Casings out of communism so that she withdrew her favors from young Medway. That young man bedridden in a hospital because he had sought other feminine tranquilization to maintain his nervous norm. But—and this was an interesting phase to Mr Barnett—here at the nadir of these sequences, life had taken an upward slant. Young Medway would publicize his plight, and perhaps he might start a movement that would wipe out social diseases, just as tuberculosis, once also cloaked in shame, had been brought under control. And that perhaps might lead to vastly greater and more virile populations over the face of the earth and thus produce still more terrible wars and still more appalling famines.

And each particular step in this series had produced lateral effects. One of these was Miss Casings' routing him out of his tête-à-tête with Miss Emmes. If they had not been disturbed, possibly he might have persuaded Miss Emmes not to go to Reading, and this might have saved her life. And so on and on and on, as long as time should last, these blind, undirected series through play and interplay would produce tragedy and comedy and heroism and baseness and altruism and selfishness; and of such erratic linkages was composed the whole history of man.

In this long chain of particulars the detail that really disturbed Mr Barnett was his loss of Miss Emmes for the evening.

There is no arithmetic for mood. He could have had her only for an hour or two longer at most, but he came out of the Medical Memorial thinking of her with a sense of privation.

He considered going home and talking to Miss Lester, but this held nothing but a promise of emptiness. She had very amiably but finally withdrawn from him, and everything they could say to each other would only stress their silent division.

He walked into the kiosk of a subway, bought a paper and then waited on the platform for a train. As the other passengers gathered, he leafed through his journal. On the fourth page his eye caught the name of Rani Gup.

As the express roared up, Mr Barnett folded his paper small enough to show only the editorial and crowded into the central car. He found a lodgment for his elbow around a vertical iron post near the door, with a light only two or three feet above his head. A woman with a violin was mashed against his chest, and a beggar trying to distribute leaflets telling how he was crippled pushed past his back. It was one of the most convenient places on the express in which to read.

The editorial stated that Mr Gup had criticized American civilization in that its entire intellectual effort was to make the body of man safe, comfortable and free from the necessity of moral restraint. That all obstacles which would necessitate either a physical or a moral struggle for existence were removed as completely as possible by mechanical, medical and social invention. And that the struggle of the universal to irradiate and inform all matter with its own freedom and splendor had been rendered nugatory by America's brilliant but local and superficial success in the cul-de-sac of materialistic invention.

At the end of the paragraph came the inevitable Ameri-

can editorial quip, "This is what comes of getting one's feet overheated."

Ironically enough, upon the very next page Mr Barnett came upon a large advertisement of Dr Myron Fyke's new book, *Will You Live After Death?*

Three editions sold in August.

Four editions sold in September.

Tops list of nonfiction best sellers.

"Obligatory reading."—Will Mautchick in *Literary Post*.

Mr Barnett in his depression realized that Dr Fyke would never consent to the name Barnett appearing in any of his book advertisements. And although he realized that now he no longer had any need of such publicity, his depression grew more profound.

When the Georgian reached his rooming house he felt the blank dependence of a man in his late forties on the spiritual amenities of some woman. He felt he must go to Miss Lester, even though she was that hopeless stranger: a woman a man has once known intimately. On the third floor he tapped dubiously at her door. He was instantly sorry he had done it. Inside, voices began talking, and he heard Miss Lester excuse herself. She opened the door and, with a very pleased and cordial lisp, invited him in. When Mr Barnett saw her visitor he attempted to excuse himself, but she would have none of it.

"No, come on in. Mr Derekthon was just telling me about the invention he and Mr Schmalkin have worked out."

"I had very little to do with it," disclaimed Derekson, "just the mathematical end."

"But mathematics is everything," asserted their hostess warmly. "All science is based on mathematics."

Mr Barnett agreed to this and asked Derekson how Schmalkin was getting on. The mathematician said well, as far as he knew.

"Is he getting ready to leave the country? What about his deportation?"

"Schmalkin can't find out anything about it. Apparently there was nothing to it. He told me he had never been served with any legal notices. Right now he is all stirred up trying to keep his name out of the papers."

"What's he done to get into the——"

"Oh, the invention—the radio invention that belongs to the university. It may be a very big thing, and he doesn't want his name in it when the news breaks."

"My Lord!" ejaculated Mr Barnett. "A tutor—not wanting his name in the papers! How does he expect to get to be a professor? Doesn't he realize the newspapers are the real appointing power behind the board of——"

"Schmalkin is queer," admitted Derekson. "And then he's a very modest——"

"Modesty! Modesty! Scientific modesty!" satirized Miss Lester. "Why can't scientific men be like writers and movie stars and prize fighters? Why should just one set of men be modest? That's what I preach to Mr Derekthon."

Here Mr Derekson was getting to his feet, abandoning his claim to Miss Lester's society with the easy assurance of possession.

"Remember, Letah," he said, "tomorrow evening at seven-fifteen."

Mr Barnett tried to stop his departure by earnestly declaring that he didn't want to run him off, that he himself was going that moment. But it was Mr Derekson who, with Northern decision, vanished and left Mr Barnett still apologizing to Miss Lester for ruining her party.

The girl, however, was in a very amiable mood and continued talking about Mr Derekson's invention. As she continued on this theme Mr Barnett grew more and more depressed. He knew very well that when a woman talks to one man about another man, the man to whom she is talking is utterly and hopelessly forgotten.

"You know, Letah," he said sadly, in one of the inter-

vals of her narration, "it's got so I see almost nothing of you these days."

The Iowa girl checked herself and became aware that Mr Barnett was calling, one might say, in person, and that he was not one of those mute, imaginary beings to which the human race address their soliloquys, and possibly their prayers.

"Well—I don't see you, either," she pointed out rather unnecessarily.

"You never say good morning any more." He meant by this that she never kissed him or so much as tapped at his door.

"Well, of course you have other callers," said the girl.

"Now, Letah," reproached Mr Barnett, "she was a pupil of mine. She came to advise with me about getting a political job. She is going away tomorrow, and—and I doubt if she ever gets back."

"What do you mean, won't get back?"

Mr Barnett told her about Miss Emmes.

The Iowa girl was shocked and speculative.

"I'll venture she has no beau—I'll bet she never had a beau."

"I doubt if she had," returned Mr Barnett grayly, then added disconnectedly, "Her sister got married today."

"Well—lot of differenth between sisters."

"Yes—yes. Letah—uh—why can't you wish me good morning these mornings—as you always have done?"

"You really want to know?"

"Of course."

The girl paused for several seconds, then asked in a different tone:

"Do you remember Aunt Mary Lake Semberly?"

"Your aunt who ran that——"

Miss Lester nodded.

"Yes—the Christian Community."

"I remember her. Did you get another note from her?"

The girl made a slight gesture.

"She's dead."

The Georgian was pulled up sharply.

"Dead! When did she die?"

Miss Lester drew her breath and compressed her lips.

"Oh—Friday—two weeks ago."

"Well, I certainly am sorry—yes, I certainly am, Letah. I know she—she meant a lot to you." He turned his eyes from the girl to the blank brick wall which he could see through her window. He pondered what to say. In the South he would have expressed the hope that she would see her aunt again, but . . . students in the university did not believe in such things. Finally his mind veered around to himself once more: "That—that isn't why you changed your attitude toward me?"

"Yes, I—I don't think my Aunt Mary Lake would like to see me . . . kithing a married man."

He looked at her with wrinkling brows.

"Your Aunt Mary Lake wouldn't like to see you—I thought you said she was——"

The girl drew a quick breath for self-control.

"Yes—she is."

"I—I'm afraid I don't understand——"

"No, I'm sure you don't. Aunt Mary Lake died in—in quite a strange way."

Mr Barnett, with his frown of sympathy and curiosity, continued looking at her. The girl went on unevenly:

"She was working in a vineyard they had out there. A—a number of her members were working with her. And then—all at onth—she—she just stopped work and told them all good-by." Here Miss Lester began blinking her eyes. "She—went around—over the whole community—telling all her d-disciples—good-by. She—she seemed in ath good health ath ever—so they wrote me. Then she went back to—to the community house and—and lay down on the bed and—and just went to thleep."

Miss Lester took out her handkerchief and sat silently wiping away her tears.

Mr Barnett was moved at the recital.

"You think she—sees you now?" he asked in a queer voice.

"Don't you? You don't think she—she's dead—do you?"

"Letah, I—I don't know what to think."

The girl sobbed.

"No—that's the truth. *Nobody* knowth what to think!"

After a space, when she had ceased weeping, he asked gently, to distract her attention:

"Where are you and Mr Derekson going tomorrow evening?"

Miss Lester swallowed and thought a moment before she remembered that they were going to Dr Nisson's dinner.

"Nisson's dinner," repeated Mr Barnett absently, then with a touch of interest: "Nisson's dinner—I sort of remember buying a ticket for Nisson's dinner—believe I'll go see if I can find it."

He moved out of the doorway, speculating on the ticket, and Miss Lester forgot him at once.

MR BARNETT FOUND THE TICKET in a pocket of a light summer suit which he had hung away in his closet. And this brought up the question of a dinner companion. Here he was rather at a loss. Miss Lester was going with Derekson; Miss Emmes was on the train for Reading. Besides, the Southerner felt that Miss Emmes was hardly ornamental enough to take out to a formal dinner. It was all right for Northern men to follow the Northern custom of inviting to banquets ladies who were brilliant conversationalists, but as for himself he would follow the manner of his fathers and ask some woman whose form and features were at one with the flower piece and the damask.

The Georgian pondered on who might serve. He thought of and slowly eliminated Miss Moe in Dr Fyke's office. If Miss Casings could tear herself temporarily away from young Fargason Medway, an evening's outing would do her good. The girl at the Housing Bureau's desk passed before his mind, and he remembered that telegraph companies supplied woman companions at a reasonable figure.

During all this pondering, in the back of Mr Barnett's head lay Miss Marie Redneau. The obstacle here was not only her probable inaccessibility and her reputation in the university, but the very luxury of her appearance. The ideal person for a dinner companion is a lady who gives an alluring yet modest promise of physical charm but does not enter into a bond-and-mortgage guarantee of it.

No, Mr Barnett could not possibly escort a girl like Marie Redéau to the Nisson dinner. But now that he had thought of her she pre-empted all other women from his mind. He wondered if she was in a position to go to the banquet with anyone, or was she still preoccupied with Chekolokovsky? What a beef to befool such a woman! A hulk without the poetry to treasure the cool completion of the girl! If he were only allowed to show the French girl the meaning of Southern romantici . . . Here he put his mind back on the dinner. Well, he could under no circumstances escort a girl like Redéau to the Nisson dinner.

The university crowd did not teach morals. They held no truck whatever with the righteousness-mongers of a fundamentalist stripe. On the other hand they did not approve of the exhibitionism of the artistic and social sets in Megapolis. They maintained a neutral stand, neither singed by vice nor lathered by virtue, as they directed the youth of the world toward the good lucrative life in the social and mechanical sciences.

As Mr Barnett reached this decision against inviting Miss Redéau to the dinner, he shoved himself up out of his shabby chair, moved aimlessly about his room and finally settled down at the telephone. He called 2415 Audubon Circle.

He could not invite her to dinner, but he was simply calling her up to see how she was. He had not heard from her in a long time, and naturally he was interested in a friend.

Here a baritone voice with a foreign accent interrupted his thoughts:

"Miss Redéau's apartment. With whom did you wish to speak?"

"That you, Chekolokovsky? . . . This is Barnett. . . . I'd like to speak to Miss Redéau."

As he said this he thought acridly that if they were in the South and Chekolokovsky should persistently haunt

the apartment of a woman of ill fame, some society for moral coercion would take him in hand and bring a sudden end to his amour.

A minute or two later, when the French girl came on the wire, she and Mr Barnett talked with gaiety for a brief space, then the Georgian invited her to go with him to the Nisson banquet. She declined on the ground of a prior engagement. Mr Barnett was quite taken aback. He had thought, since his better judgment warned him against inviting the medium, that this was a sign that she would accept his invitation.

After this essay Mr Barnett made no other attempt to find a companion, mainly, he told himself, because his wife, Matilda, probably would disapprove of his going with any woman at all. And on the following evening he went to the Nisson dinner alone.

As it turned out, this was no drawback. There were four other Southerners seated near Mr Barnett: a woman three chairs to his left, a man directly across the table, a young married couple across to his right. These last had recently come up from the South.

The dialect of the Southern women at this Northern banquet was so much more pronounced than anything that Mr Barnett had ever heard at home that it was impossible even for him not to admire it.

The five found each other out almost at once and began talking across their table companions about the exquisite courtesy of the South, the charm of Southern ladies and the gallant compliments paid them by Southern gentlemen. And above all they praised the soft, low, lovely speech of the South, the last pure English lingering on an otherwise nasal continent. When the Northerners who were sandwiched in between the five could make themselves heard, they joined wholeheartedly in this paean to the marvelous charm, manners and courtesy of the Southern people and related incidents that had occurred there in the university to illustrate it.

A man sitting next to Mr Barnett leaned over and said in a slightly foreign voice:

"I did not know you came from such a place."

And Mr Barnett whispered back confidentially:

"I didn't know it either until I reached Megapolis."

The man who had addressed him was Mr Schmalkin. When Mr Barnett first found his place at the table, he had observed that he was seated next to the Russian and was very pleased with the arrangement, but when he found some Southerners to talk to, naturally Schmalkin passed out of his mind. Now, to make up for his neglect, he told Schmalkin that he was very glad chance had thrown them together, that in Megapolis one almost never saw one's friends except by some such social accident as this.

"It is another instance of the transfer of individual initiative to group action," suggested Schmalkin. "It goes along with the idea of labor unions, communism, corporations and all centralized authority. The question is, are we transferring the direction of our private lives to a higher and more fully informed leadership or to chance?"

Mr Barnett looked at his friend.

"Why, there can be no question about that—to a higher and more fully informed leadership."

"Your dilemma in this answer is that any wise, informed leadership must take into consideration only the public good. If your good as an individual is fortunate enough to coincide with the public good, then your transfer of leadership is a happy one, but if it does not coincide with the public good, you suffer loss. But it is pure chance whether any given individual shall or shall not be sacrificed for the public good. Therefore, when you trust the direction of your private affairs to any authority whatsoever besides yourself, you are risking the upshot of your life to simple chance."

Mr Barnett could not follow this very closely, because just here the Southern bride was whispering urgently across the table:

"Oh, Mr Barnett! Oh, Georgia! The man with the beard at the speakers' table—is that Dr Myron Fyke, the author?"

Mr Barnett said yes and added that he had worked with Dr Fyke on one of his books.

"You have!" gasped the bride. "I told Jim that was Dr Myron Fyke, the author. I've seen his pictures in the paper. I've bought two or three of his books. I haven't read 'em yet."

"She's very literary," said the young husband, with a touch of controlled pride. "She nearly breaks me buying books. I think she could write herself if she would try."

When Mr Barnett's attention revolved back to Schmalkin, the Russian was saying in his complicated fashion that he had a plan that would overcome in some degree the fortuity that governed social contacts in Megapolis. There was considerable talk between the two which passed through several very abstract strata indeed but finally condensed or materialized into an invitation for Mr Barnett to call at Mr Schmalkin's apartment at eight o'clock Monday evening in the following week and see the salmon fisheries on the Columbia River.

As Mr Barnett really was watching the bride, who was a very pretty girl, he thought he must have misunderstood what the Russian had said, so he asked what he meant by seeing the salmon fisheries on the Columbia River.

"Just what I say—come and see them operate."

"Moving pictures?" guessed Mr Barnett.

"No, no. You will actually see the fishermen at work. You will see the salmon jump out of the water."

Mr Barnett suddenly realized what Schmalkin did mean, and he began: "Why, certainly I'll come—" Here a clearing of the tables and twisting around of chairs set up all over the great hotel dining room. The eating was over, and the speakers at the toastmaster's table were moistening their lips and at the same time attempting to

look as if they did not know they were about to be called upon to speak.

The toastmaster arose and tapped with his gavel.

"Colleagues, ladies and gentlemen, this is a happy event and, in the same breath, a painful occasion. It is a banquet of honor and a lenten farewell. I am referring, ladies and gentlemen, to the fact that Dr Nisson, who sits beside me and who has served our institution with so much credit to himself and profit to others, is leaving us. He has been called to the seat of government, where he will take up the far vaster but no more brilliant work of national social reconstruction."

Amid the applause at this point the toastmaster did not try to make himself heard but simply indicated Dr Nisson with a gesture and sat down.

When the younger man arose, the cheering grew louder, then presently died away. Dr Nisson's sentences were crisp with the Northern effect of being bitten off. He said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I appreciate your applause. Here in the bosom of my own academic family, I feel I owe some explanation of my new work and my new objectives. Naturally I cannot go into details. But I think I can state roundly that in the near future some effort may be put forth to press the capitalistic system into the service of the American people and not permit the American people to remain forever in the service of the capitalistic system."

Here applause broke out among the younger diners, while their elders sat and listened.

"Some methods which possibly may be used to encourage a wider service of capital in the state would be through taxation, government supervision, and the encouragement of organized labor to seek a more nearly proportionate share of the profits of industry. [Renewed applause among the more youthful of the audience.]

"Ladies and gentlemen, it is an ironic fact that in the early days of our democracy, when capital was railroading

through our state and national assemblies laws and concessions for its own benefit, it did not realize it was then laying a legal precedent whereby its own corpus could be railroaded out of existence. [Applause.] Unfortunately for poetic justice the men who initiated legal buccaneering are dead. [Laughter.] Indeed, I believe souls were expressly invented and a fiery hell arranged as their domicile by the outraged sensibility of mankind toward their acquisitive overlords. Their lives invariably were too brief to be reached by the retributive processes of history. [Prolonged laughter.] Happily the overlords made a great mistake. They invented an immortal body without a soul, the corporation. Their corporations live on, and they can be got at. [Laughter.] And it has and will prove much more satisfying to everyone concerned to get at a body without a soul than to attempt to get at a soul without a body. There is more nourishment in it. [Great laughter.] This economic fact will probably prove the death blow to the ancient folk idea of immortality, although my friend and colleague, Dr Fyke, has done yeoman's service in the cause. [Laughter and applause.]

"Ladies and gentlemen, permit me at this point to become somewhat more serious. The particular difference between the oriental and occidental religions is the messianic quality of the occidental faith. We of the West have always looked forward to a new heaven and a new earth. Not many decades ago the westward migration of our forefathers expressed this faith in terms of actual geographic territory. Today we are striving for a new heaven and a new earth in the realm of economics. Tomorrow, when the matter of distribution of mere bread and clothes shall have been settled equitably and satisfactorily, I will venture that we shall journey onward, still seeking a new heaven and a new earth in the realm of mental and spiritual efficiency. Ladies and gentlemen, the Western world is incorrigibly bound for heaven. [Prolonged applause.] We will clash, we will let loose the dogs of war for our particu-

lar notions of an economic heaven precisely as did our ancestors in upholding some particular kind of other-worldly heaven. But eventually an economic tolerance will be reached just as a religious tolerance has now been reached, and we will hold the battles now raging over food and shelter to be one of the maddest caprices in human history. [Prolonged applause.] However, war will march on. In that day we will battle over mental, biologic and spiritual perfection. There will be new class struggles, not between economic classes, but between intellectual, biologic and spiritual classes.

"The simple nationalism which is being inculcated today, apart from any territorial idea, is a blurred beginning of the coming conflict. But the clash will clarify and analyze itself. Governments will attempt to select groups which are to be permitted to survive and propagate. Leisure will be awarded to groups which are qualified to use it in a socially profitable manner. There will have to be some planned equivalent of the natural law of the survival of the fittest when medical science grows so anarchistically efficient as to allow any living lump to survive—morons, the feeble, the infirm, the criminal and the congenitally indigent and irresponsible. At first the more obvious social misfits will be weeded out, one might say peacefully, but the process of elimination will continue until pitched battles are fought between different sorts of brains. A prelude to this climactic struggle was fought when the Cro-Magnon man exterminated the Neanderthal man on the ancient fields of Europe.

"And the only possible peace in this universal suicide will not come through religion, science or fraternity, but through art—art, the capability of the human mind to see beauty in something outside of itself and its kind, to see humor and pathos in something beyond its own family, even to see that worthiness may exist in something outside of its own race. [Applause.] Therefore it would be logical for the artists of the world, seeing that they hold the key

to human peace and harmony, to embattle themselves and march forth to exterminate the other more combative and less civilized classes of people. This would apply logic to evolution and make the world safe for artists. [Great laughter.] Or perhaps we might serve the same purpose with less bloodletting by injecting a little art into all classes of persons, even into our financiers, our military, our racketeers, our politicians, our bankers, our armament makers; our divorcees—enough to cause them to get along with other kinds of people. [Great laughter.] Then the human race will no longer be enslaved through low wages, military conscription, extortion, graft, theft, wars and alimony. [Prolonged laughter.]

"In conclusion allow me to forsake that future paradise which I am prophesying and return to the present. May I give reasons for my faith in the economic reform which I am called to Washington to assist?

"Why will America allow her corporations and financiers to be reduced to organs of the state? First, I think no one can doubt the human justice of a more equitable distribution of the products of labor. But this reason is remote and academic. A closer one will be that the political party that draws on the resources of these agencies and distributes the money among the people will insure for itself a majority of the votes in any coming election.

"American political history shows that as long as the American voter feels himself prosperous and well paid, he has never turned any political party out of office, notwithstanding theft, graft and maladministration. The American voter casts his ballot purely for his own immediate personal advantage. He is not concerned with any drift toward communism or collectivism so long as he drifts in comfort.

"He is concerned with the here and now, not with the future. Politically he is a sensory, not a cerebral, organism. Although the American voter is strongly individualistic and capitalistic-minded, the government, under my

plan, will use this self-centered trait in him to obtain his suffrage to a collectivist regime by making it profitable to him personally. Indeed, ladies and gentlemen, a good government, a successful government represents, not the ideas, but the best interests of the governed."

A perfect storm of applause burst forth at Dr Nisson's peroration. The diners pushed forward to shake his hand and compliment him on his speech. Groups collected, admiring among themselves the realistic means by which he proposed to forward his idealism. Eventually the banquet ended and the banqueteers went home.

MR BARNETT AND THE SOUTHERN GIRL who had sat on his left descended together in the elevator of the Royal George Hotel. When the banquet was over, the two had gravitated toward each other and began talking almost as brother and sister. Her "r"-less drawl was music to the Georgian, the soft natural music of his home. He could have kissed her out of sheer gratefulness, and she, no doubt, could have been kissed, but they were surrounded by Northerners in the descending cage.

It turned out that she was a Mrs Lucy May Levering of Roanoke, Virginia, kin to the Belchers in South Carolina, to the Sandersons in Georgia, and the Sandersons were kin to the Hicks of Alabama and the Hicks were kin to the Barnetts. The two, probably, were thirty-second cousins. This is a point any two Southerners settle immediately when they meet in the North.

The two stood jammed in the crowded elevator, but they did not see another person around them. They were quite alone.

"What did you think of that terrible speech?" asked Mrs Levering, with wide eyes.

Here Mr Barnett became aware of the crowd mashing him from all angles, and he lowered his voice:

"It sounded seditious to me."

"It was seditious!" stressed the Virginia school teacher.

"Well, do you think he can do what he says he's going to do?"

"Well, maybe he can up here where there is no—you know—patriotism. But he can't down there."

"Oh goodness, no—not down there," whispered Mr Barnett earnestly in return. "There would be war down there."

"The only question is, will the people in the South catch on in time?" whispered Mrs Levering.

"Well, there you are," admitted Mr Barnett. "They prob'ly won't. You see, his party has got the name Democrats—and of course the Southern people *are* Democrats, no matter what sort of platform the Democratic party puts out."

"Sure, they have to be on account of the niggers," whispered Mrs Levering. "But what do you think of his tricking people into all this communistic stuff?"

"If he just wouldn't call himself a Democrat he would never trick the South!" whispered Mr Barnett.

"Chained to a usurper by a name," murmured Mrs Levering, narrowing her eyes and nodding.

A hand from behind was laid on Mr Barnett's shoulder.

"How'd you like Nisson's talk, Mr Barnett?" inquired a young man.

"I think it is the most shameless, barefaced plotting——"

"Well, not exactly barefaced," qualified the young man. "He told it here at a college dinner."

"Well, the whole college is the same way," interrupted Mrs Levering warmly. "There is not a professor up here who can solve the first proposition of Euclid without bringing in a communistic argument somewhere in his demonstration!"

"The shameful part to me is that he proposes to take the money of one class of Americans and pay another class of Americans to vote his party into continued power."

The young man scratched his head.

"Hasn't the North always done that? Didn't the Republican party for many decades pay the Northern manufacturers a protective tariff to keep their party in power?"

"The South is not the North," stated Mrs Levering crisply. "The South resents being bribed to vote against the very fundamentals of our government."

"Or look at it like this," put in Mr Barnett warmly: "This university is supported by donations from the capitalist class. Now to use their organization, supported by their money, to undermine them—that's the most treacherous, the most shameless——"

"But wait," begged the young man, lifting a finger. "The very spirit of a university is mental freedom. Any capitalist endowing the university has a tacit understanding that it may advance toward any intellectual objective which it recognizes as the truth. He assumes that risk when he gives his money."

"Well, I say it is treacherous and criminal," snapped Mrs Levering, "for the university to use a wealthy man's money and come to the decision that it is best for the country to cut the wealthy man's throat."

"And here's another point," put in Mr Barnett: "Nisson says he himself is going to decide what is good for the people. But the idea here in America is for the people to decide what is good for them and not to be led blindfold anywhere."

By this time the elevator was on the street floor and the three were walking fairly by themselves across the lobby.

The young man agreed hurriedly:

"All right, all right—but why should the people decide for themselves, if Nisson's right?"

"It would develop the country as a whole," put in Mrs Levering.

"Do the same thing the other way," argued the young man. "Only difference, one is in the active voice, the other, the passive."

A notion which Mr Barnett had garnered somewhere flickered through his head:

"It would make a difference if all of us were going through this world for some purpose."

"What do you mean, some purpose?" demanded the

young man as the three paused in the entrance and signaled to the doorman for a taxicab.

"Well, I mean—you know—if we went on—out of here—and did something else—we wouldn't go out children—we'd go out authentic, mature human——"

The young man began laughing incredulously.

"You can't mean, by 'out of here', out of this world?"

"Yes, by George, I do!" snapped Mr Barnett, rather nettled at his mirth. "I'm from the South. Down there we think maybe there's something to it."

"Well, you know that is interesting!" cried the young man. "You won't mind going on record, will you, mixing this religious slant toward government——"

"What sort of record?"

"I was thinking of trying out the big metropolitan papers with it. Such a new medieval slant: 'Religion and State Mixed Again by Dr Andrew Simpson Barnett of Megapolis University'—make a great headline."

Here Mr Barnett suddenly recognized the journalism student who had given him his initial notoriety in the *Megapolis Review*. This put him on guard; then he reflected swiftly that the fellow really had done him a good turn. Possibly this would turn out to be another. So he said to him outright:

"You can quote me in your article as being against Nisson's program. The dictatorship he is trying to set up is of a piece with the materialism of the colleges. Dictatorships strike at religion because they want to use men's bodies without the responsibility of caring for their souls. Our universities discredit the soul idea and make ready for dictatorships."

No sooner had Mr Barnett said this than he became dubious about the wisdom of having been so outspoken. This continued on his mind to such an extent that he could not give his whole attention to the Virginia woman. Eventually he pleaded that he had a pressing engagement, put her into a taxi, paid for it and watched her drive away.

MR ANDREW BARNETT RETURNED to his apartment on One Hundred and Twenty-third Street still dubious over the interview he had more or less unwittingly given to the student of journalism.

As he was making ready for bed he realized that he should have considered what he was saying. Any sentiment that was grateful to the North would likely receive adverse publicity in the South, and vice versa. He should by all means have followed the example of the great politicians, suppressed any real personal opinion of his own and stuck to platitudes.

And he would have done it if it hadn't been for that Mrs Levering. If only he hadn't fallen into homespun honesty with her! . . . It carked his heart. But then, no doubt, he was making a mountain out of a molehill. The metropolitan papers might not print the article of the student of journalism. He wished he never had met Mrs Lucy May Levering.

Such doubtful thoughts were in Mr Barnett's mind when he went to sleep that night, and they were still there when he awakened in the morning. They were, however, softened, as a night's rest always allays, to some extent, a man's apprehensions.

He was getting ready to go out to breakfast when there came a very small tap at his door. He opened it and saw Miss Lester. Sight of the honest, straightforward Western

girl whose common sense prevented a man from making a fool of himself did his heart good. He warmly invited her to enter, thinking how much happier the world would be if Southern women were only like this Western woman. He hoped that she was returning to their old intimacy. But no, she remained outside his door.

"Your picture was on the front page of the paper this morning," she explained, "and I thought you might like to have it. If you keep your clippings, it may help you to keep your offit."

"That's a fact—it might," agreed Mr Barnett. "Is the article good?"

"Well—I— It's owing to what a person thinks about it."

"Yes, that's so. Most articles are good or bad according to the way you think."

"Now this article would be a very good article in the Thouth. That's one reason I brought the paper to you."

"Thank you very much, Letah."

Mr Barnett's tone, chastened by Mrs Levering, was very earnest indeed. He took the paper, and Miss Lester went back into her room. The headlines left him uncertain:

SOUTHERN PROFESSOR IN MEGAPOLIS UNIVERSITY ACCUSES
FACULTY OF DISLOYAL DESIGNS

DECLARES SOUTH WILL GO TO WAR TO CURB SEDITIOUS
NORTH AND EAST

At a banquet given in honor of Dr Clingman Nisson, Professor Andrew S. Barnett, of the chair of practical politics, spoke in bitter condemnation of the radical program which he alleges was voiced by the principal speaker . . .

From this point on the article gave in detail Mr Barnett's allegations of what the speaker had said. There was no attempt at humor or sarcasm. It was a correct report, as nearly as Mr Barnett could recall, of what he had told the student of journalism.

The Georgian scratched his head as he read this and thought, "Well, that's my opinion. . . . A man has a right to express his own opinion." But these were mere words. In his heart he knew that a politician had no right whatever to express his complete personal opinion—that is, if he meant to remain a politician.

A ring drew him to his telephone, and a voice in the receiver said:

"City editor of the *Index* speaking. We have a statement from Dr Clingman Nisson denying the report of his speech which you gave to the *News*. He states precisely what he did say in yesterday evening's after-dinner speech. Will you see a reporter and go over the points with him? Check those on which you agree with Dr Nisson and those on which you disagree?"

Mr Barnett became very much disturbed.

"Look here, Dr Nisson undoubtedly knows what he said better than I do."

The city editor's voice became quite amiable and reassuring:

"Now, I wouldn't quite say that, Dr Barnett. He knows what he *meant* to say. But you listened without any pre-conceptions to mislead you. You no doubt have a better idea of what he *did* say."

"Mm-mm—I suppose that is true," hesitated the Georgian.

"And the *Index* is very anxious to know just how the faculty of Megapolis University does feel on the points mentioned by Dr Nisson. It really is a national question."

"Ye-es—ye-es."

"So we are extremely glad that you, Dr Barnett, a professor of politics, are in a position to speak authoritatively on just what is the political color of our American universities."

This calling him "Dr Barnett" was very grateful to the Georgian, and he made some assenting and dignified noises over the telephone.

"So if you would be good enough to tell our reporter just what you heard, check over Dr Nisson's statement with him, and then sign your own story of the speech——"

"Sign my own story?"

"Yes, so that if other papers copy our story and ascribe to you statements that you did not say, you can turn to the copy which we will hold on file here in the *Index* office and prove absolutely just what you did say. The *Index* always tries to protect anyone who gives it a story."

"Oh yes, yes, I see," nodded Mr Barnett, with the twitchy, uncertain feeling of a person who is trying to skate on ice for the first time. "All right, you may send on your reporter."

Mr Barnett put off his breakfast and remained in his apartment for an hour and a half, until the reporter came. The fellow took down another account of what Mr Barnett had heard at the banquet and went away.

For the next two days nothing happened. The Georgian's uneasiness disappeared somewhat, and other interests asserted themselves. The day came around when he was to call on Schmalkin.

The Russian held an odd attraction for Mr Barnett. The brooding little man succeeded in injecting a kind of semiscientific mysticism into every topic he discussed. It was surprising to the Georgian that Schmalkin ever pinned down his fantasies to anything so practical as television.

So on this particular evening Mr Barnett took an up-town bus, anticipating not only the new television set, but also a long theory on the spiritual signification of television in a materialistic universe. That was the general impression one gained from Schmalkin's conversation: the universe was materialistic, hard and fast, but over it flickered the ignis fatuus of a spiritual realm which tragically had no existence.

Schmalkin's apartment was an old six-story brick building on Wembley Street. Mr Barnett reached the place,

climbed the stoop steps and punched the button for Apartment C on the fifth floor. The Georgian stood beside the bell, expecting every moment the buzz in the lock which would admit him. Presently he pressed again. Eventually he decided that Schmalkin's bell was out of order and pressed the janitor's button for admission.

The janitor, a frowsy man with a coal-streaked face, appeared in the basement door below the stoop and inquired what was wanted. Mr Barnett explained his engagement with Schmalkin; the janitor said that Mr Schmalkin was out, but that Mr Barnett might wait.

"Where shall I wait, here or in Schmalkin's apartment?" inquired the Southerner.

"Hi think per'aps 'ere, sir. Mr Schmalkin is very careful about 'is apartment, sir."

Mr Barnett went down into the apartment in the basement and learned that the janitor was a Mr Josiah Redell.

"Redell," repeated Mr Barnett thoughtfully. "I know some Reedles in Georgia—I wonder if they are not some branch of your family who have changed the pronunciation of their family name a little."

"It wouldn't surprise me," agreed Mr Redell. "We 'ave a story in my family of a brother of my grandfather emigrating to America over a hundred years ago. My father once received a letter from an Hamerican Redell."

Presently the subject of family history went dry and the two men simply sat in the basement sitting room.

"When do you expect Mr Schmalkin back?" inquired Mr Barnett at last.

"That I cahn't tell," replied Mr Redell. "'E's a very uncertain man, and now that I think of it, he sent his friend back after that radio contrivance 'e was working on, so 'e's probably off giving a show somew'eres."

Mr Barnett sat up a bit straighter.

"A show? Why, he was to give me a show."

Mr Redell was disconcerted himself.

"Well now, if 'e was to give you a show, 'e couldn't 'ave

forgot your engagement, do you suppose? Or 'e means to bring his machine back again?"

"Does he often forget his dates?"

"I never knew him to, sir."

A breath of suspicion passed through the Georgian.

"You say his friend came back after his machine?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you see him? You knew he was one of Schmalkin's friends?"

"Oh yes, yes, 'e's been to see him a number of times, sir."

"You let him into Schmalkin's apartment?"

"Didn't 'ave to, sir. 'E let 'issel in with Mr Schmalkin's key."

Mr Barnett's suspicion died away again.

"Well, of course—if he sent his key back——"

"Hit surprised me, too, sir, seeing as 'ow Mr Schmalkin was always such a particular man about 'is things, and this man comin' in with 'is *key*. But—'e 'ad 'em both, front-door key and apartment, so there was nothing I could say, sir."

"No, no, of course not." Suddenly Mr Barnett's suspicions arose again. "Look here, Mr Redell, you—do you happen to have a paper around here with the shipping lists in it?"

"Yes, I 'ave, sir—'ere's one. What is it, sir, you think about the——"

Mr Barnett reached for the paper.

"The reason I'm asking is because I happen to know that Mr Schmalkin himself was always interested in shipping."

"Yes, sir."

"He was very interested—nervously interested."

"Yes, sir."

"And the first time I ever met him, I was with him and Derekson at a restaurant. And when Schmalkin started to pay the bill, he saw written upon it——" Here Mr Barnett interrupted himself to thump the paper and ejaculate, "Here, look here! By God, just what I thought!"

Mr Redell came over and looked at the paper.

"What is it, sir?"

"The Ivan Godorovitch sailed at five o'clock this afternoon."

"Ivan Godo—— But w'at if it did, sir?" inquired the janitor blankly. "W'at if the Ivan——"

"Let's go up and see what his apartment looks like," proposed Mr Barnett, with apprehension.

Mr Redell got his keys.

"You don't think 'e's sailed on the Ivan Godo—without giving notice, do you?"

By this time the two were in the automatic elevator on their way up to the fifth floor. They stepped off at the landing and went to Apartment C. The apartment, when Mr Redell entered, appeared untouched except for the loose ends of some wires where some kind of an electrical machine had been removed.

Mr Barnett pointed this out.

"When did he do that? How long have those wires been like that?"

"I couldn't say, sir. Neither me nor my wife ever came up to Apartment C, sir. Mr Schmalkin 'ad in outside 'elp when he wanted it cleaned, sir."

"But that was his television contrivance—that was the thing he was so careful for nobody to touch?"

"I don't know w'ere 'e kept it, sir."

"And then he sent a friend up to bring it to him so he could give a show at some other place—after he invited me here to see it?"

"That was my guess, sir."

"Look here," decided Mr Barnett, in genuine apprehension, "I think we'd better telephone the police about this!"

"Police? What do you think——"

"I don't know. Let the police decide what to think."

"I—I 'ate to 'ave the bobbies messin' up Mr Schmal-

kin's apartment, sir, if nothin' 'as 'appened. W'at do you suppose 'as 'appened, sir?"

"I can't say, but ring up Sergeant Lannigan at the police station on Eighty-fifth Street. I know him. He'll know what to do."

LATE THAT EVENING Mr Barnett returned to his apartment, revolving in his head the riddle that Schmalkin posed. As he entered his room he heard someone talking across the narrow hallway and recognized Derekson's voice. He went over and tapped at the door, and Miss Lester opened it.

When she saw who it was she broke out enthusiastically:

"Oh, Mr Barnett, I have a whole pile of papers full of you! Jutht look!" She pointed at a stack of newspapers in the corner of her small room.

Her visitor was incredulous.

"Not about me!"

"Yes, about you!"

"Are—are they all the same paper?"

"No, they're all different papers. I bought them at the out-of-town newthstand. There were a lot more, too, but that was all the money I had."

Mr Barnett spoke to Derekson, then went bewilderedly to the pile. There were twenty or thirty papers. All of them carried a story about him on the front page. More than half of them had used his picture. He picked one up and glanced at a paragraph. It said:

No doubt the three muses, wine, women and song of the banquet, inspired Professor Barnett to see the Gorgon head of treason

among a group of the most conservative academic thinkers in America today—banquets affect some folk like that.

A Western journal commented:

We understand Professor Barnett is a Southern man and has specialized in Southern folklore. His bitter indictment of Dr Nisson is probably of the same texture as the Southern reports of a mare's nest loaded with rabbit eggs.

It was Mr Barnett's first brush with the whimsical pillory of the American press. A strange feeling came over him at his own helplessness. The papers came from all parts of the United States. Millions of persons would be laughing because he told them that a group of men were trying to change the complexion of their civilization, and that they might be chivied into this change, willy-nilly, through the manipulation of their own resources.

He began thinking confusedly of some way to set himself right with the American people, but even in this first moment he realized there was no way to catch the sober attention of the country. A fortune spent in advertising would never command the publicity of this spontaneous waggonery of the press.

Holding the papers in his hand, he tried to put aside the tragedy of American humor. He had come into Miss Lester's room for some purpose . . .

"Oh yes. Mr Derekson," he inquired suddenly, "do you know where Schmalkin is?"

"I do not," returned Derekson, briefly and without interest.

"Well, I'm very uneasy about him," and Mr Barnett went ahead to tell of his visit to Schmalkin's apartment. He related all the circumstances and finally said that he had looked in the shipping columns and found that a Russian ship had sailed at five o'clock that afternoon.

"That was what he was always nervous about, wasn't it—ships?" inquired Miss Lester, in some excitement.

"Yes, I believe it was," agreed Mr Derekson.

"I thought that you and he were—quite close friends?" said Mr Barnett, disappointed somehow in Derekson's reactions.

"No, we were just lunch acquaintances," returned the mathematician, in an even tone. "I have never been to his apartment. I didn't know he was building a television set of his own."

"There was a girl, Miss Emmes, who seemed to know Schmalkin—she's in Reading, I think. Now it might be that Schmalkin—" The notion struck Mr Barnett that possibly the Russian had gone to Reading to see Miss Emmes . . . perhaps Miss Emmes had got into trouble and had telegraphed for him . . . or at a still wilder guess, it was imaginable that Schmalkin had taken his television set to Reading to show the world the brutalities of a strike. In fact, the moment he thought of Miss Emmes and Schmalkin it sent his imagination off into a maze of romantic possibilities. None of these, however, could he tell to Derekson or to Miss Lester. "Well, I hope nothing has happened to him," he said finally, "and I don't suppose that anything really has. . . . Good night."

"Good night," returned Derekson in a reserved tone.

"Oh, Mithter Barnett, don't you want your paperth?" cried Miss Lester. "I bought them for you!"

"Oh, you did? Well, thank you very much." He stooped and lifted the whole stack of papers, bade the two good night again and returned to his own room.

Once there, he gave up the thought of Schmalkin and sat looking at the papers which he piled on the floor.

Presently he began going through them one by one to see what states they came from. Sure enough, he found a number of Georgia papers, Atlanta, Columbus, Augusta . . .

Mr Barnett had had it in his head, if any real trouble came up about his office of county school superintendent, that he would make the race for state superintendent of

education. There was no law requiring that the state superintendent of education should have a college degree. He was thankful now that he had not injected such a stumbling stone as that into his bill. With the Megapolis reputation that he had been making he knew that he could be elected to the superintendency of education in his home state. The office would be quite an honor, too, in a dry academic way. It was true that nobody knew the name of the superintendent of education in any state, but when anyone was introduced to a state superintendent of education, a momentary breath of honor went with the office . . . and the salary was good the year round.

Now all his plans had been abruptly laughed away. And it was such tragic laughter. If he could write an article to the papers and make the people of America as a whole realize the truthfulness of what he had said. If they could realize the imminent social change which Dr Nisson advocated and proposed to effect . . . His talk with the Hindu student in the circle of cannas came back to him. It was a kind of suicide for a people to make wide and abrupt changes in their social set-up. Even if it were for the better, that particular people disappeared from the earth, and their children were quite something else. There was no fruition time among the generations to work out . . . he could not quite recall just what the Hindu student had said, but it had been a solemn enough admonition.

In the midst of his broodings Mr Barnett heard Derekson pass through the hallway down the steps. For some reason this brought Schmalkin back to his mind. He arose from his easy chair and was about to telephone the Russian's apartment, when Miss Lester tapped on his door.

"Mr Barnett, I want to apologize to you for—for Mr Derekthon," she said in an unhappy voice.

"Apologize for Derekson—what for? Come on in and have a seat."

"No, I just came by to say how sorry I was that he was so rude."

"Why, Letah, I don't hold that against you—or him either. I imagine he had something on his mind that made him short. . . . Come on in."

"No, thank you. He has, Mr Barnett. He's got a great deal on his mind. That's what I wanted to tell you—so you wouldn't think he—he thnubbed you for nothing."

"You wanted to tell me what?"

"What Mr Derekthon felt so badly about. I think it's my duty to tell you—old friendth like you two were."

"Mm-mm—I've only known him about two months."

"Two months—that's a very old friendship in Megapolith."

"Well—yes, I suppose it is. Come on in and have a——"

"No, no, it won't take a moment. I—— It was my fault that he was so—so short."

"Your fault! You mean you had made him mad?"

"No-o—not exactly angry. Hurt."

"Oh—well then, of course I don't hold anything against——"

Miss Lester drew a breath, moistened her lips, then said in a low, quick tone:

"I—told him."

Mr Barnett looked at the girl.

"Told him?"

Miss Lester's bosom gave a quick lift.

"I—I mean—about us. I—I didn't think it would hurt him so much. I didn't suppoth a modern man would expect a—a woman of my age never to have had a—a——"

"Why, my God, you don't mean to say you told him!" cried the Southerner.

Miss Lester nodded, blinking her eyes.

"It—didn't theem right to—to let him go on thinking——"

Mr Barnett's mind went flying apprehensively into the future to see if this news of his dalliance could effect adversely his standing in the university. That would be a terrible thing, if his casual connection with Miss Lester—a

mere incident that really held no especial significance for him, should . . .

"Well, why did you risk your—your standing with him?" stammered Mr Barnett.

Miss Lester's expression softened.

"Ithn't that just like a Southern man!" she said, in a moved tone. "Always thinking about the woman first. . . . Andrew, it was because he asked me to marry him. . . . I couldn't even answer his quethtion—until he knew."

W

HEN MR BARNETT awakened on the following morning he was depressed by the memory of a disagreeable dream. The substance of his vision he could not recall, but he knew it was a sign of trouble on its way to plague him.

As he sat up, blinking, he did not have to search far to know what his dream meant. With Derekson his enemy, with almost every paper in the nation ridiculing him, he realized that his hope of becoming state superintendent of education in Georgia had disappeared. That, no doubt, was the meaning of his nightmare.

He got out of bed, rubbing his eyes, when his telephone rang. That was Derekson. Mr Barnett looked at the instrument. Why in heaven's name had Miss Lester told Derekson about their past intimacy? There was an indecent frankness about the Western woman. Why couldn't she maintain that aristocratic reserve about her private life that was one of the ornaments of Southern womanhood? The telephone rang again. Mr Barnett went to it with resignation. Derekson had started some sort of . . .

"Hello! Hello! Andrew Barnett speaking."

A girl's voice said in his ear:

"Will you hold the phone a moment, please, Mr Barnett?"

The Georgian assented with ill humor. These Northern bigwigs who had their secretaries call a man up and then

waste the man's time waiting for the bigwig to come to the telephone . . . Just here a baritone voice, an exceedingly suave baritone voice of the sort that is used in offices where personalities rather than commodities are sold, sounded in his ear.

"*Dr Barnett,*" wooed the solicitous voice, "this is Jenrecke Attractions. . . . No, no, not Mr Attractions, just Jenrecke Attractions. . . . That's correct. I am Mr Jenrecke of Jenrecke Attractions. *Dr Barnett*, I just wondered, as I read the complimentary notices of your interview in two or three hundred papers—I just wondered, *Dr Barnett*, if you had considered the possibility of a lecture tour. . . . Oh yes, you understood me correctly, a lecture tour. . . . Why, you—you are the one who will do the lecturing. . . . Yes, but you are lecturing now out at the university. . . . Oh, that makes no difference, none at all. No experience whatever is required to lecture to the American public, *Dr Barnett*. Why, Jenrecke Attractions booked for a solid year a girl, an eighteen-year-old girl, who had started out quite poor, and yet inside of six months she had sued one millionaire for divorce and alimony, another millionaire for breach of promise, and the son of another millionaire for . . . Oh, Jenrecke Attractions wrote her lecture for her, naturally. We take care of all such clerical details as that."

Mr Barnett declined the offer, but his spirit sank rather than improved. The North was such a rushing, impudent, nonreticent sort of place. Really everything around him, everybody he met, was stepped up to an unnatural degree of acquisitive activity. . . . If they planned their whirlwind campaigns they probably did it in their sleep, because they had no time to spare once they were awake and plunging into . . . His telephone rang again.

He knew it was Jenrecke Attractions making him a cash offer of so many hundreds of dollars a night . . . or perhaps it was thousands of dollars a night. . . . He picked up the telephone to repeat his refusal, no matter what

Jenrecke Attractions offered, when the voice of another girl said in his ear:

"This is Dean Overbrook's secretary, Mr Barnett. The dean asked if it would be convenient for you to call at his office between nine and ten this morning?"

Mr Barnett's mouth dropped a little open. He thought, "Imagine, Derekson telling the dean!" Then he railed inwardly: "If that sort of thing is all right among the students, why in the devil shouldn't an instructor . . ." But his Southern sense of fitness saw that a line should be drawn at the teachers. Teachers were not supposed to teach morality or make any comment on the private lives of the undergraduates, but they were supposed to possess morality.

But the really ironical part of the situation was that he, Andrew Barnett, was essentially a moral man. It was a mere incident, an accident of mood, that had brought about the intimacy between him and Miss Lester. It had been nothing of importance. He, perhaps, was the most temperate, the most conservative, the most carefully conventional man on the campus; indeed, he was a politician!

Aloud he said:

"I'll be very glad to see the dean at that hour."

He stood holding the receiver in his hand for several moments. Then he hung it up.

Two students were in Dean Overbrook's office when Mr Barnett entered. The dean sent them out at once. The Georgian stood looking at the old gentleman, wondering just how he would start a conversation on so delicate and difficult a subject. Then he wondered, still more grayly, what manner of defense was possible. For him to insinuate that the whole affair was a . . . a kind of accident . . . a momentary lapse . . . No, a Southerner couldn't offer any such . . .

The dean, after his academic fashion, cleared his throat and took a long historic run to work up momentum for his take-off. He began talking about civilization and the fun-

damental concepts of human life on earth. The old Greek idea, he said, was cyclic, and its symbol was Ixion's wheel, an endless play of one group of forces leading to endless repetition. The Christian conception, proceeded the dean, was the opposite of this. It was millennial. It conceived of human life arising on an ascending plane toward some divine, far-off event. "You see, this very fact injects into the Christian conception a moral quality, a continuous struggle toward transcendental ends of which the Greeks never dreamed."

Mr Barnett saw whither the dean's talk was tending, and he wanted to make some defense here, but the old gentleman's ponderous historic reprimand left him no appropriate moment to introduce the comparatively trivial subject of himself and Miss Lester. And, just as he feared, the dean continued:

"The virtues, the personal triumphs of every man over himself and his surroundings, were building stones in that final City of God. Truth, honor, loving-kindness—they are all stereotyped now, mere platitudes, but once they were flaming banners beneath which heroes marched."

Mr Barnett nodded nervously and moistened his lips.

"Today, Mr Barnett, those few men who are still imbued with the Christian cosmogony instinctively combat the two modern forms of social collectivism, communism and fascism. Their theory is that this world is nothing more than a training field for a wider, fuller, more glorious existence, and the finished product of this life should be, not a great nation composed of layers of human machines supporting an apex of superintelligences, but that every man should be a complete and unique individual destined to serve the glory of God." The dean paused for a moment, then added: "That is the philosophic basis of the fight between democracy and the other social theories, and, naturally, our modern universities have almost destroyed the democratic fortress. There can be no real reason advanced in our modern materialistic civilization why men

should become individuals instead of cogs. If leaders can make a greater machine out of cogs than they can out of men, why shouldn't they breed and train cogs? Isn't it the practical step toward complete efficiency?"

As the dean's talk was now wandering about in a tangential orbit that apparently would never return to him and Miss Lester, Mr Barnett was heartened to ask:

"Efficiency for what?"

The dean gave a brief laugh.

"That question does not admit of a single answer. Some nations would march about the earth like Caesar and possess the world. Some would build the highest buildings and the hugest ships. Some would possess the most gold. Some would destroy all other races except their own. As a matter of fact, when you remove the transcendental goal from the human race, all other objectives become thin or absurd or bombastic—uh—that was why I asked you to come and see me this morning, Mr Barnett; I wanted to congratulate you on the candor and courage of your attitude toward the banquet the other night, and your fearless expression of it in the forum of our daily press."

Mr Barnett blinked at the dean with a feeling as if his chair swayed under him.

"Con—gratulate—me?"

"Yes. It isn't every instructor in the university who would voice a courageous minority of one, even if he knew that millions of the laymen of America would applaud his protest."

Amid his confusion Mr Barnett made a politician's effort to glean what he could out of the situation:

"Well, I—I always try to—to live up to the—the best that's in me."

"And fine, fine, very fine," commended the dean.

"Thank you, sir."

"However," continued the dean after a pause, "we try to keep this a practical school——"

"Yes, yes, of course," assented Mr Barnett.

"Now, for example, while it was most praiseworthy for you to say what you really thought about the speeches at the banquet, still—and you'll see this for yourself—it was not a practical thing to do."

"You say—not practical?"

"Exactly, not practical. You see, here is a peculiar thing about our Western civilization. Christianity has so impressed the millennial idea upon the Western mind that it can't give it up. So it has transposed that conception from the other world to this world. It has changed it from a spiritual realm to a mechanical and material realm. The requisites for entering that realm have also changed from godliness, truth, kindness, to efficiency, obedience, ruthlessness in carrying out instructions. There has been a wide shift in the virtues."

"Yes—I see that," admitted Mr Barnett, wondering where this circuitous conversation led.

"So therefore, since the major trend of academic thought is toward a materialistic collectivism, and your particular viewpoint is toward a spiritualistic individualism, it becomes, you might say, a point of weakness to attempt to combine the two ideas in a single institution."

Mr Barnett began to see vaguely whither these complimentary implications tended. A sudden dismay filled him.

"You say—uh—to attempt to combine them in the same—"

"Yes, exactly. The—the regents feel that—ah—under the circumstances, perhaps you would feel—ah—intellectually more comfortable with some other university. But, mind you, Mr Barnett, our whole university has nothing but the highest admiration for your courageous stand before the press and your unselfish support of your own political theories."

Mr Barnett's mouth went dry.

"You don't mean I—I'm quitting?"

"As I say, under the circumstances—"

"But—but you, yourself, Dean, you talk as if—uh—as if you might agree with the basis of my view yourself."

"When a man is seventy-eight years old, Mr Barnett, his preoccupation is not so much to reform the world as to arrange himself comfortably in it—for a year or two longer."

W

HEN MR BARNETT came out of the dean's office, the sunshine which an hour ago had appeared brilliant now lay over the walks and the buildings and the circle of cannas as a dull urban light. The whole city looked smokier than he had ever seen it, blearing the skies. His feeling of belonging to the university suddenly had been snapped, and now he stood, an alien, in the doorway of the Administration Building.

The thought that he had been dismissed from the university because he had answered the questions of the journalism student in an honest, neighborly fashion galled Mr Barnett.

He moved across the grounds to the circle of cannas, mentally cursing the student of journalism. If this were the South, no reporter would undermine a man's standing merely for the sake of an article. . . . He turned his thoughts away from the righteousness, the kindness, the courtesy of the South and fixed them on the problem of what he should do now.

He thought of going back to Georgia and giving up any pretense to attaining a college degree. He would simply run the office of superintendent of county schools in the way it always had been run—by a plain, honest man without any academic folderols to mix him up. He had done all that was humanly possible for a man to do in his effort at conforming with what he now saw was a senseless

law. It was even a seditious law. It was a law demanding that the county school superintendents of Georgia should be trained in principles adverse to American democracy. Well, that was something that he, Andrew Simpson Barnett, would fight to his dying breath!

In the midst of this altruistic and highly patriotic decision, Mr Barnett's attention was drawn by the rumbling and skirling of a fife-and-drum corps, and presently the university's radical group appeared, marching in front of the Housing Bureau. They came on very erect, very rattling, very determined, just as they always did. And as they approached, Mr Barnett realized with a pang that he was going to have to give up all of Megapolis—its freakiness, its hugeness, its kaleidoscope of people, its amoral way of living, its perpetual unexpectedness—and go back to Georgia, where today repeated yesterday and tomorrow would repeat today. Why, in Georgia even the doings of this radical club, which hardly caused the lift of an eyelash on the campus of Megapolis, would be a seven-day wonder and a scandal.

The marchers were flying newly inscribed banners. Their banners were always fire new. And as they drew near, Mr Barnett read:

**"LABOR ORGANIZER ILLEGALLY DETAINED." "RESCUE
EVELYN EMMES FROM READING JAIL." "TELEGRAPH
YOUR CONGRESSMAN TO HELP LIBERATE EVELYN
EMMES FROM READING COUNTY JAIL."**

And the drums and the fifes blared on, trrrump-te-dump, trrrump-te-dump, trrrdl, trrrdl, trrrump-te-dump.

The radical group were enjoying a deeply satisfying performance. They were acting collectively, moving toward vague objectives which did not have to be clear cut, because their information was also collective; some knew one detail and some another.

Mr Barnett stood quite shocked at the fact that Miss Emmes was in jail. He had almost forgotten her in the

dancing impermanence of the Northern scene. But now, as he recalled his former political student, he realized that her term in jail was as deeply satisfying to her as all this marching and tootling was soothing to the radicals. It supplied a contact with some particular reality amid the impersonal existence of the North. When Miss Emmes finally was released she would go around preaching unionism, and her jail sentence would be a great feather in her cap. He guessed that in its depths it was the starved psychological equivalent of love and childbirth. Almost he felt like telegraphing felicitations.

The radical club was staging quite a parade today, much longer than usual; the marchers were more carefully dressed. As the rear guard came up they displayed more streamers. At first Mr Barnett did not quite read them because he knew they would repeat what had gone before. But a certain grouping of letters which he really did not have to read to recognize shocked him into an amazed attention. He stared at the last of the banners, hardly able to believe his eyes. They read:

"AGITATE AGAINST UNJUST DISMISSAL OF TEACHER!"

"DR ANDREW SIMPSON BARNETT, MOST POPULAR INSTRUCTOR IN MEGAPOLIS, THROWN OUT FOR POLITICAL REASONS! WRITE OR TELEGRAPH BOARD OF REGENTS!"

ACT NOW!"

Mr Barnett was so astounded—and, in a way, moved—that he simply stared. He also felt very conspicuous. His name never before had been so placarded and paraded.

But as he continued standing, it dawned on him that nobody in the line of march knew him, just as they had not known Schmalkin. A moment later, however, he saw he was mistaken. In the rear guard he caught sight of young Medway and Miss Casings. The two marched side by side, holding up a great red protest against his own mistreatment.

The Georgian was quite surprised to see that particular

pair. He had thought young Medway was still in the hospital and that Miss Casings, whose unsocialized denials had brought her lover to such a pass, was still by his side. He hurried over and caught their attention. The two were delighted to see him and dropped out of line for a moment. Mr Barnett himself was touched at their loyalty.

"How did you-all get that so quickly?" he called out, motioning at their placard.

"Oh, we had advance information," nodded young Medway mysteriously. "We have something corresponding with the Gay-Pay-Oo—informers, you know—all through the faculty."

"But look here," protested Mr Barnett, "your informers got this wrong. I didn't get fired for radicalism, I got fired for conservatism. I'm afraid you folks really are backing the wrong man this time."

"Oh no, no, that is the very principle of radicalism, Mr Barnett," assured young Medway. "We seize on any fact, color it to suit our audience and use it against the selfish, tyrannical, capitalistic system. We feel the end justifies the means."

"As soon as capitalism is overthrown and communism installed," added Miss Casings, "all misstatements will be rigidly forbidden."

"But at present we're fighting the devil with fire," nodded young Medway triumphantly.

"But the people," pressed Mr Barnett, "—haven't they got a right to know the true facts so they can decide on—?"

"The people can never decide anything, they can never think anything, their convictions must always be arranged for them by their leaders. That is one of the basic principles of the Bolsheviks."

Mr Barnett stood for a moment rather at loss what to say.

The couple were about to move forward with their banner when the Georgian asked solicitously:

"You yourself, Fargason—I'm glad to see you out. Are you getting all right?"

Miss Casings burst into delighted explanation:

"Why, there never was anything the matter with Med. He's just a hypo, that's all. After he had that—that date with the other girl, he got to studying about what he had done. He wondered if he had—you know—got into trouble. So he borrowed a medical book and began reading the symptoms. Well, he had them all. He complained of every symptom and fooled the doctors right up through a long series of examinations until they got to the Wassermann blood test. Of course he couldn't simulate that. He couldn't change his blood stream. And then the doctors found out he was a hypo." Here Miss Casings looked at Fargason and burst out laughing again in her happiness at this droll outcome. Young Medway blushed quite crimson at his own nervous instability. He hoisted his banner.

"Come on, let's get going," he cried. "What will the club think if we don't keep up with *this* procession!"

"Now this is nothing unusual," demurred Mr Barnett. "I think I've seen such processions——"

"Yes, it is," put in Miss Casings happily. "And, Med, why not ask Mr Barnett to come with us?"

"Why, sure, sure," agreed young Medway. "Come along, Mr Barnett."

"But, Fargason, I don't quite understand——"

"It's our—er—ah—wedding procession," explained young Medway.

"Yes," cried Miss Casings in frank exuberance, "we are on our way to St Cecelia's Chapel, where Med and I are going to be married. We thought, by mixing our wedding into this protest, we'd surely get the papers to take notice of the outrageous way the board of regents have treated you."

MR ANDREW BARNETT WAS in the midst of that travail of soul which always afflicts a Southern man when he packs his bags and makes ready to leave Megapolis. The Southerner always has a feeling that his departure is final. Never again will he find the time, the opportunity and the money for journeying once more to this incredible city. The South to which he returns is like a sister turning a quiet cheek for his caress after the dizzying embrace of a mistress. It is the fragrant serenity of some old box-hedged garden after the blare of a circus.

As Mr Barnett packed his books and clothes into his suitcase, he loitered in his work for any reason he could invent. He saw a paper lying in his shabby armchair, and a paragraph in it caught his eye. He did not observe the date of the paper, because to a Southern man the facts in a newspaper remain valid even after it has been published for twenty-four hours; they do not resolve themselves, through the decomposition of time, into a magma of the unconsidered and the inconsiderable.

The article stated that Dr Myron Fyke was making investigations in pathological psychology at the Medical Memorial Hospital preparatory to publishing a new book entitled, *How Sane Are You?*

The notice went on to say that Dr Fyke had completed his studies in abnormal psychology and would deliver, on Friday at 8 p.m. at Civic Center, 212 Audubon Street, a

lecture on the survival of the human personality after death. Admission free.

Mr Barnett thought first of Miss Redeau whom he was leaving, and then his mind cast out this remembrance as a man fishes a painful gravel from his shoe. He pondered if he would remain in town long enough to hear Dr Fyke's lecture. He had no idea when he would leave Megapolis. When he was packed, when he could devise no further excuse for remaining in the city, then he would go to the station and take the first train through Philadelphia and Washington for the South. So really he did not know whether he would be in town on Friday or not. He would be if he had not gone South.

His indecision and uncertainty gave him an oddly forlorn and deserted feeling. It seemed as if the world had grown huger, more intractable and heartless, chivying him around from pillar to post.

Miss Lester tapped at his door, and he opened it, glad of a few moments' reprieve from the depressing ordeal of leaving Megapolis. His caller evidently was excited. She stood on his threshold and held a paper toward him.

"Have you seen thith?" she asked sharply.

"You mean about Dr Fyke's lecture?" hazarded the Georgian, really not caring about the matter because Megapolis was dying to him.

"No, no. Mr Schmalkin is suing the university for a share in their new television invention. He is suing on the groundth of being a co-inventor!"

Mr Barnett was amazed.

"So Schmalkin didn't leave the city after all?"

"Oh yeth, he did! He is suing from Russia!"

"Well, he's got his nerve. He knows all the inventions of the scientists here belong to the univer——"

"Oh, but that's the point. Mr Schmalkin was jutht an assistant. He wasn't a professor. He hadn't signed anything. In the interview in thith paper, his lawyer thaid it looked like a very good case."

"Lawyers always say that," reminded Mr Barnett.

"Yes, but Mr Derekthon is in the very same boat," ejaculated Miss Lester. "If Mr Schmalkin has any rights, so has Mr Derekthon. Don't you think he ought to sue, too?"

This really was an exciting idea . . . Gunnar Derekson having an interest in the great television invention.

"Well, I don't know—it wouldn't be exactly professional to—"

"Now don't begin that!" cried Miss Lester. "Gunnar irritates me with his professional ethics. I think it's all a humbug the big men use to keep the little men down."

"Come on in, sit down, let's talk it over," invited Mr Barnett, with a hope of wasting some time in this fashion.

"No-o—I won't intrude."

"You won't be intruding. I'm not doing anything. I'm trying to figure out whether I want to go home now or—or wait—oh, say till the first of the year."

This reminded Miss Lester that Mr Barnett had been dismissed from his instructorship, and her voice softened in sympathy:

"Well, if you are like I am, you'll stay on till the firtht—and then stay on till the firtht of the year after that—and then stay on until the firtht of the year after that year. And so on and on."

Mr Barnett began laughing at his difficult leave-taking.

"That's me exactly. Come on in, sit down—let's figure out a way for me to leave Megapolis without any casualties."

"I would come in if I could, but—to be frank, I—I promised Gunnar I—wouldn't go into your room any more un—unleth he was with me."

"Good Lord!" ejaculated Mr Barnett. "Why, I feel like a leper. . . . Can't come into my room unless you've got a bodyguard—for God's sake!"

"I told Gunnar those were unnecessary precautions—that I didn't even know him when I—uh— Well, I really

muthn't keep you away from your packing. I wanted to tell you about Mr Schmalkin. He's in Russia. He must have decided all at once to go to Russia when we got so excited about him. He was a strange man, anyway, and lived a strange life—a rather thad one, too."

With this veering from her original theme, Miss Lester bade her fellow lodger good day and went back to her own room.

Mr Barnett stood amid his packing, filled with a sense of privation. Schmalkin had returned to Russia. Derekson was no longer his friend. Derekson's defection had drawn away Miss Lester. Dean Overbrook had dismissed him with lovely compliments, and now he could by no means call at the dean's office for a little talk. Dr Fyke and the whole personnel of his laboratory were strangers to him now and . . . they had always been. Indeed, all the people he had come to meet and vaguely know were strangers to him. They were beings whose orbits of life had cut his own at a point and then had withdrawn to greater and greater distances until they were lost in the time and space of an alien psychology.

Mr Barnett gave up his packing, took his hat and set forth to the university grounds. Automatically he gravitated to the circle of cannas which offered to his imagination a Roman palace. But today it was a useless proffer. The university, the whole far-flung city, were about to disappear from his life. When once he had returned to the South, Megapolis and her skyey towers would become as distant as Rome herself. Even in this moment of bidding it good-by, it took on, somehow, an unreality, as if he had never journeyed to this city or hoped for an academic honor. All this architectural and scholastic dignity presently would fade from view and leave him standing as he always had stood in the insecure office of county school superintendent in Atlee County, Georgia.

A well-set-up man came briskly up the walk, turned off the faint path and entered the circle. The newcomer gave

only a casual glance at the dead and dying flowers and the pale, funereal marble of the bench.

"You are Mr Barnett, I believe?" he began courteously.

The Georgian admitted his identity and got to his feet, looking at the man.

"You are the person who telephoned the police headquarters concerning the disappearance of Mr Schmalkin. That was—let me see"—he referred to a card, "—from 83 Wembley Street on the eighteenth at 9.15 P.M."

A touch of dismay went through the Georgian. The newspapers, of late, had been full of criminals notifying the police of their own crimes.

"Mr Schmalkin has been heard from," explained Mr Barnett, with a certain eagerness. "As a matter of fact he has started a suit against——"

The man nodded perfunctorily.

"Yes, yes, quite so. Now, Mr Barnett, what grounds did you have for telephoning the police from 83 Wembley Street on the evening of the eighteenth?"

Mr Barnett related with much detail his television engagement with Schmalkin, his conversation with the English janitor, the incident that had happened to Schmalkin in the restaurant and the effort made to deport the Russian from this country. This last, Mr Barnett said, was engineered by a certain detective named Brown.

"This man Brown—how did you know he was a detective?" inquired the stranger incidentally.

"I didn't myself. I was with a woman friend, and she said she thought Brown looked like a detective."

The stranger, who was so very Northern and so very energetic that he had remained standing up to this point, now yielded to the suggestion in the Georgian's drawl and sat down on the bench.

"Had you considered the advisability of becoming friends with a woman who—who knew what detectives looked like?"

Mr Barnett's brain jumped at a startling possibility:

"Do you mean Miss Redeau is connected with Mr Schmalkin's disappearance? But she couldn't be, because Mr Schmalkin is in Russia now. He went of his own free—"

"How could he be in Russia? The Ivan Godorovitch is not due in Russia for five more days yet."

Mr Barnett was bewildered.

"But he has started suit against the university for part ownership in—"

"He isn't necessarily on Russian soil. He may have begun his legal action by wireless from the Ivan Godorovitch. The university was merely questioning whether Schmalkin himself was instituting the suit or whether it was done by other interested parties—whether Schmalkin is alive or dead."

"Alive or dead!" repeated Mr Barnett, in a windy tone.

"Yes, whether he sailed of his own will or was kidnaped."

"Kidnaped! My God! Who—"

"I can tell you the whole thing now," said the stranger. "We are pretty sure it was done by that big fellow who reported Schmalkin as a deportable alien to the Department of Justice. Schmalkin was not deportable at all, he was a student in scientific research in a university. So we wondered why all this smoke about Schmalkin. That was what I was doing over at the Medway party—keeping an eye on Schmalkin to see that nothing happened to him."

Mr Barnett blinked his eyes and suddenly recognized his companion.

"Well, I declare! You know, when you first came in here I thought I knew you. How're you getting on?"

The gentleman laughed a little.

"Oh, all right. The university is really going to have trouble defending the suit either way. If Schmalkin is dead, the Russian government simply sues as his legatee; if he is alive, it will sue through Schmalkin. The fact that Chekolokovsky got Schmalkin onto the ship by force,

stratagem or persuasion has nothing in the world to do with the legal status of Schmalkin's rights in the invention."

A little thrill went through Mr Barnett. This was so exactly like the North, indirection piled upon indirection. Now the South was solid, and whatever *seemed* to be *was*. . . . He came back to the riddle in hand:

"Well—Chekolokovsky—can't you pick him up if he assisted in kidnaping a—"

Mr Brown made a casual waggle of his hand.

"He's gone; of course, he sailed on the Godorovitch with Schmalkin. We saw that the moment we looked at the passenger list. No-o-o, I don't believe the university has any defense at all. How Schmalkin sailed to Russia is no part of the United States patent laws."

Mr Brown got out a little book, made a few notes of what Mr Barnett knew; then, without a glance at the circle of withering flowers, he walked briskly away to some other person, no doubt quite unknown to Mr Barnett, who figured in this endless chain of the North.

As for the Georgian himself, he was deeply moved at the undetermined fate of Mr Schmalkin. Of all the persons he had met in Megapolis, he felt that he had come closer, somehow, to the remote, almost ghostly personality of the Russian. And then, of course, there was the pathetic irony that Schmalkin himself, the last of his family, finally should have fallen a victim to his denatured god, the Historic Moment.

MR BARNETT, like many another sojourner in Megapolis, doubtless would have remained indefinitely in the doldrums on the question of actually buying a ticket, leaving the city and going home, had he not received a letter from Tildy, his wife.

The Georgia school superintendent-elect opened the envelope with misgivings, because Tildy never wrote a line unless the family was in trouble of some sort.

The enclosure read:

MY DARLING HUSBAND:

Have you got your degree yet? I told you right at the beginning you should not have made such a law. I have this minute learned something that has undermined my trust in every friend we've got. Aunt Nancy Spratt come over this morning and told me that the Sheriff's wife told Polly Belew that Mark Anderson who is old man Bill Anderson's boy, has come back from Mt. Moriah Babtist college in Texas where he has been going for the last four year and him and the Sheriff and the Clerk and Master and the County Judge and the Recorder of Deeds have all collugued against you and made it up to enjoin you from taking your office on the first of the year on the grounds of incompetence and that they will get the Governor to appoint Mark Anderson as interim Superintendent until the next election.

It is the meanest political trick I ever heard of civilized people doing, especially sence you made the law yourself for the im-

provement of education in Georgia. I told Aunt Nancy that she could tell the Sheriff's wife to tell Polly Belew to tell old man Bill Anderson that he could tell his son from me that them was my sentiments.

Another thing old man Bill Anderson is saying; he says his boy has graduated from a religious school. And he says you won't have no religion at all if you have been off to a Northern college, even if you've got brains enough to get through, which he says he doubts.

I told Aunt Nancy you was one of the most religious men I ever knew and you wouldn't let no school have any influence over you as to that. Also I told her that a Barnett has more brains in a minute than a Anderson had in a year. And she said she guessed that was so . . . political brains.

Your loving wife,
TILDY.

P.S. The baby's stomach is upset. Losing confidunce in so many friends all at once has curdled my milk. TILDY.

When Mr Barnett finished this letter he stood staring at the old-fashioned blue-lined paper, with his thoughts moving intently among the officials of his state and county. He would have to go home at once. An education was an adornment to a Georgia county school superintendent, but a solid political backing was a necessity. He knew a number of representatives and several state senators who could get at the governor. Besides, he knew a number of unpleasant things about the county judge, the clerk and master and the recorder of deeds which would whip them back into shape.

For the first time in his dilly-dallying Mr Barnett really began to pack. He was jamming his suitcase with a man's lack of finesse when Miss Lester tapped and opened his door again.

"You received a telephone call from—" She broke off blankly. "Why, you're not going away!" she ejaculated, as if she had never heard of the idea before.

Mr Barnett straightened up, with lips tightly closed from exasperation. He walked to the door, since she would not enter his room, and handed her the letter.

"Read that," he directed.

Miss Lester shifted a newspaper which she held in her hand and read the letter. When she had finished she looked up in sympathy.

"Well, I declare! So all you've done up here is for nothing?"

"If I had only said in my law, 'or equivalent,'" moaned Mr Barnett, "there would have been absolutely nothing to it. You know, as long as I've been working and studying and teaching up here, I've got the equivalent."

"I know you have, Mr Barnett."

"And as for Mark Anderson going to a religious college, that makes a man more incompetent for modern school work. That's why I lost my job as a lecturer—just a touch of religion, but that was too much."

"Do you thuppose you can go back to your home and tell your people that?"

"No, no, I couldn't tell 'em that. That would be against me down there, speaking against religion would. No, old man Bill Anderson is on the right track down there, spreading a report I have been to a irreligious school." Mr Barnett stared out of the window and drew a long breath. "I know positively that boy, Mark Anderson, is incompetent for the office—or he wouldn't be running for it." He shook his head. "That's what I hate. I hate to see the office go to an incompetent man—that's why I wrote the law in the first place."

"What makes you so sure he'sh incompetent?" inquired Miss Lester charitably. "I mean aside from the fact that he'sh trying to get your position."

"Why, because he's running for office—if he could do anything else he wouldn't have an office."

Miss Lester became reflective:

"Yes, the same sort of thing goeth on in Iowa, too—it

does all over, I thuppose. Look here, I brought you this paper to show you, you were right."

"Right how?"

"Why, all you said in your interview about Dr Nisson is coming true. When I read this, I wondered if you couldn't take the article, bring it before the board of regenth and get yourself reinstated as a teacher of practical politics."

"What's the article about?" inquired Mr Barnett, moving around to where he could see the paper.

"Here it is. It says Dr Nisson is going to have the government peg the price of cotton at parity."

"Parity!" ejaculated Mr Barnett.

"Yeth, parity. What is parity?"

"Why, it's sixteen cents," cried the Southerner, with a light in his eyes. "We farmers figure we can raise cotton at that price and make a profit on it. Why, look here, if the government will peg cotton at parity——"

"That's it!" cried Miss Lester. "That shows Dr Nisson is doing the very thing you accused him of planning to do —thubsidize the cotton planters and get their votes. I think you ought to get your position back!"

"But look here," interposed Mr Barnett excitedly. "If the government pegs cotton at sixteen cents, I won't need my job back. I won't even need a degree. I won't care whether I'm superintendent of the county schools or not. Why, the devil, I'm going back home and start planting cotton!"

Miss Lester opened her eyes.

"But I thought you were opposed to Dr Nisson's manipulating——"

"Well—no, no—not cotton."

Mr Barnett had taken the paper from her and was reading the article intently.

Miss Lester looked at him for a moment, at first puzzled, then with a kind of incredulous comprehension. Finally

she seemed to dismiss Mr Barnett's somersault from her thoughts, for she said:

"What I really came in here to do was to give you a telephone call. Somebody asked you to ring up Audubon Circle 2415. I wrote it down there on the margin of the paper."

Having delivered this message, she returned to her own room, with possibly just a little fleck of the gilt scraped from the lustrous image of her hero.

For a few minutes the anticipation of a high price for cotton, guaranteed by the government, overshadowed in Mr Barnett's mind the telephone number given him by Miss Lester. But as the price of cotton was far away and the edge of the newspaper was in his palm, it presently caught his attention. It was, of course, Miss Redeau's telephone number. As he looked at it he became amazed that he had not telephoned Miss Redeau long before this. The government agent, Brown, had told him that Chekolokovsky had sailed to Russia. He ought to have realized that the French girl was no longer preoccupied by that huge, lumbering fellow.

The Southerner started to the telephone in his room, but on second thought put on his hat and went out to seek the impersonal privacy of a booth in a drugstore. In a booth he would dial his own number and not be overheard by a suspicious landlady.

As the Georgian hurried to the store, the thought that he must leave Megapolis at so early a date rolled like a stone upon his dawning happiness.

He thought to himself, with the bitterness of self-denial in his heart, that if he were a hard, materialistic Northern man he would get a divorce from Tildy, pick up some sort of job here in the city and never leave Megapolis at all. But he was a Southerner, he didn't believe in divorces. . . . He wished to heaven that he were not such a moral man . . . if he could only be like the scruple-free North

. . . Here he entered the booth, closed the soundproof door and dialed the number.

Miss Redeau herself answered the wire. Her drawled long "e's" gave him a trembling feeling of intimacy even over the telephone. She chided him for not having called her up long ago and suggested that he come over and have dinner with her that evening.

Mr Barnett came out of the booth and bought some cigarettes at the counter. He went out on the street and looked up and down for a florist's shop. In the shop he considered orchids for a space, but finally came down to white roses. He loved their whiteness, the soft half-lights in their centers. They symbolized the purity, the untouched soul of the French girl that lay pale, impersonal and mysterious behind all the casual manner of her life. Her lovers came, her lovers went like porters passing the closed door of a temple. Their bestowals probably brought her something, some relaxation, perhaps some positive nervous strengthening in her ghostly ministrations.

He himself would go to her, not as a roué or a libertine, but as a devotee in some Babylonian temple where soul and body were intertwined in their ecstasy.

It would be a fitting end to his sojourn in Megapolis. It would have been utterly unpredictable that he should find a moment of mystical rapture in a city of the North. But that was because Megapolis was cosmopolitan. It was not the North, it was the world lifting him to its seventh heaven. After this he would return to the quiet South.

When it grew dusk, when the street lights suddenly en-chained the thoroughfares and then instantly looked as if they had been shining always, Mr Barnett set out walking for Audubon Circle. If he had been young he would have taken the subway; if he had been a bachelor he would have hailed a cab; but he was a respectable Southern middle-class married man with the faintest touch of a poet in him, and he was loath to hasten the drops from the wine cask of this hour.

He walked along, thinking how he would greet Miss Redneau. Should he kiss her hand? Should he lift her in his arms and bury his face in her bosom? Should he try to tell her the strange, other-world quality of her attraction for him? How she drew him through old engravings he had seen in poetry books when he was a child? How, when he possessed her, it would be half-worship . . . and perhaps, in a state of blessedness, there would be no difference between . . .

A great crowd in the street ahead of him, guarded by many policemen, suddenly shook Mr Barnett out of his dithyrambic mood and insinuated into his thoughts a subtle and a supernatural fear.

Ahead of him, no doubt, there was a strike. The police were keeping down a street fight. But here was the point. The disturbance in the street could very easily be an ordinary strike and a street fight, but it could also be something else. It could be an arrangement made by Special Providence to put a bullet through his head while he was on his way to a prostitute's apartment. This was exactly the sort of thing against which Southern evangelists continually warned their congregations . . . a man was on his way to a gambling palace, and he was shot . . . a girl on her way to a dance hall, and was killed in a motor wreck . . . a boy on his way to a pool parlor, and if he didn't get killed himself, a messenger suddenly rushed up to him and told him that his mother had just dropped dead. . . . And now here was he, Andrew Barnett . . . walking through a strike . . . to visit a demimondaine. It gave him quite a turn.

He decided that he would walk around a few blocks and escape the gin that Special Providence so often lays in the path of a godly man or woman who is out taking a brief moral holiday.

He went on to the nearest policeman and asked him how to find a bypath to Audubon Circle.

"Straight along this street, six blocks, buddy."

"Well, this—this jam here. It's a riot or something, isn't it?"

The policeman laughed with the down-drawn smile of anticipated trouble.

"It's going to be a riot when all this crowd try to get into that building across there."

"What building is it?"

"Civic Center."

"What are they all wanting in for?"

"There's a big shot among the university highbrows going to prove to them they've got souls. Huh, any parish priest could 'ave told 'em the same thing, but they'd rather hear it from a university big shot."

Mr Barnett stood looking at the throng under the illumination of the dull sunset sky and the street lamps. In the mixed lights he could make out little more than the mass of humanity.

"The trouble is," he said soberly, "nobody really believes the parish priest any more. They go to church and listen, some of them do—out of respect—but they really believe in the men who run the universities."

The officer nodded dubiously and whirled his stick.

"Well, I'll not be sayin' you're not right, and I wouldn't take the risk to be sayin' that you are, but there they are, jammin' the streets to hear what a university professor has to say about their souls."

IT DID NOT STRIKE MR BARNETT of Georgia that this ill-timed sobering of his mood might itself be one of the subtler works of Providence. Indeed, such an idea would never have occurred to him. According to the evangelical philosophy of the South, Providence always wrought its work by bodily harshness and never by the changing color of the soul.

But as he pushed along through the crowded street on his way to Audubon Circle, his mood was grayed by the profound pathos of the thronging people who had come to hear a message from the great Dr Fyke. What made it more sadly ironic, Mr Barnett knew that Dr Fyke's answer to this mute multitudinous query would be a negative one. He would simply say that as yet he had found no proof of the existence of the soul.

And in the meantime this great crowd, some of whom would likely die within the week, more within the month, still more within the year—they must wait. They must patiently wait for an answer to their tense question until he had assembled so many mental-reaction tests that he could say, at least with mathematical probability, aye or no.

Then he would suggest that his hearers come take the test and by their numbers add to the validity of the final answer he would give. And nobody, not even Dr Fyke himself, would know just how much of this was meant to lay a

ghost that has haunted man since first he stood beside his dead—and how much to sell his books.

Just here an antique oaken gate, expertly ornamented with wormholes and overhung with a charmingly weathered inscription done in old English letters, "AUDUBON CIRCLE," told Mr Barnett that he had reached his destination. Everything looked so old and worn that it must have been fresh from the antique maker's shop, and nothing could have been exposed to the weather for more than a few months at most.

Mr Barnett lifted an old wrought-iron latch and let himself into a circular ground set with shrubbery and an English village pond. Around this central water circled small Queen Anne cottages separated from one another by little English gardens. It was more than English: it was as if the quintessence of some English village had been distilled and its quiet poured down here in the rumbling heart of Megapolis.

Mr Barnett moved around the Circle, peering through the dull light of wrought-iron lanterns for No. 14. He found it, stepped into the entry and tapped the brass knocker on its plate. As he stood with the insurgence of his blood beginning to whisper in his ears, he thought again of the throng around Civic Center, but he put this depressing notion out of his head. He heard a woman's footsteps coming toward the door. Pressed now by an immediate necessity, modes of saluting the French girl flickered through his mind. Should he kiss her hand, her lips, her bosom? Being middle-aged, he was aware of the anti-climactic. Then an impulse came to tell her about the crowd assembled to hear Dr Fyke. The door was opened to him by a maid.

He followed the girl and a moment later found Miss Redeau in her living room. She gave him her hand and began chiding him for not coming to see her sooner:

"I theenk perhaps eet ees because of the lady you brought to the séance that evening, no?"

The French girl filled him with that momentary sense of strangeness which the absence of a few weeks makes in an acquaintance. He had to collect his thoughts to recall whom she was talking about.

"Who, Miss Lester?" he remembered. "Oh, she is to be married in a short time."

"Yes—that ees a strange theeng."

"That she should get married?"

"That anyone should get married, *mon ami*; that anyone should geeve up the swoon and centoxication of love for marriage."

"One leads to the other," defended Mr Barnett.

"*Oui*, one leads to the other—and ends there."

A thought of his wife, Tildy, came over Mr Barnett and adjured him to drink wholeheartedly of this moment, because once he had returned to Georgia he would never come to Megapolis again.

"I would hardly say that," demurred the Southerner. "I think if married folks would guard love and protect it—indeed, I thought as I came up here this evening, if I might live with you all the rest of my life—what a dream would come true!"

She looked at him with a kind of smile in her dark eyes.

"Weeth me all your life! Meester Barnette, I am afraid even weeth me all your life the business of leeving would finally crowd out the business of loving. We all know thees ees quite true, unless we are verrie young indeed—and yet we do eet—we geeve up thees sweet first moment of strangeness for the repetition and weariness and trouble of marriage. I theenk Dr Fyke could get a reason out of that, eef he weeshed."

"Reason? How do you mean?"

"It may be that lovers geeve up their love under the spell, it may be, of unborn children. Little baby souls come wheesper in our ears, 'Geeve yourself, so that we may leeve.'"

"That's a pretty fancy, Marie."

"You theenk eet ees a fancy?"

"What else could it be? There could not be a soul of someone not yet born."

"You theenk if people who are dead can come and speak and weep through me, you theenk babies who have not yet lived cannot whisper in the souls of young girls to take thees man, take that man and let them leeve beneath their hearts."

"That is poetry, Marie, it isn't biology."

"No? Biology does not speak of such theengs at all, does it?"

"Why should a child be like its mother and father?"

"Why should a soul that comes weeping through me speak weeth my voice and see weeth my eyes? How could a baby stay in the body of its mother for nine months and not partake of eets mother's body?"

The notion passed through Mr Barnett's head that this was trade talk. The French girl was forced to profess a belief in disembodied spirits because traffic in such creatures was her vocation. And this thought not only robbed her words of sincerity, but somehow it reacted on her simple physical attraction.

Miss Redeau was watching his expression, and finally she asked quite simply:

"M'sieu Barnette, what ees the matter with me?"

"Matter with you?" repeated the man, rather taken aback.

"Yes, what ees really wrong? You seem—I don't know—defferent."

"Why do you think——"

"I don't theenk, André, I know."

An explanation, a somewhat surprising explanation, came to Mr Barnett himself.

"What ees eet?" she asked, more hopefully at the change in his face.

"I—— Why, it's silly, I wouldn't like to——"

"*Oui, oui, go on.*"

"Well—— No, I won't . . . Well, it's this: you are not dressed now as you dressed in the laboratory."

The French girl was blankly astonished.

"Of course I am not dressed now as I dressed for the—— Why do you say such a theeng?"

"Because that's the way I saw you . . . your white robe and your dark hair hanging down . . . I don't know . . . When I was a little boy I used to see pictures . . . in a book of poems . . ."

The girl was amazed and touched.

"Oh, my poor André, losing our little moment because my dress ees wrong! Sit here, just a little while." She patted his hand, got up and went into an inner room.

The Georgian sat watching the inner door, breathing short breaths through his open mouth from the top of his chest. Now that she was gone his heart began a deliberate crescendo against his side. Occasionally he moistened his lips and gave a great sighing expiration. Presently the door opened again and she asked:

"Ees thees what you weeshed, André?"

The man arose without realizing that he moved and went to her. He put his arms around her, hesitating on the threshold between the reception room and the bedroom. She pressed his face against her breast and kissed his hair as she moved back into the smaller room.

"You are a verrie strange man, André," she whispered, with uncertain breaths. "Eef I had known——"

Mr Andrew Barnett of Georgia pursued man's age-long passion to blend his being with that of a woman and reach some mystical completion which had been foreshadowed in his lifetime dreams. Always it had been thwarted. Always it had ended in a brief ironic titillation of his loins, and then came his own swift return to the fundamental isolation of mankind. But as women forget their birth pangs, men can seldom note and never remember the irony of sex. Always a new face is the countenance of an angel reaching down to lift him up to heaven; a new bosom, a

new form brings the divine ichor that shall transform him into a god. The profoundest sacrilege of science was the razing, in the heart of man, of the temple of Artemis.

The Southerner arose presently and went into the bathroom. In his satiated centrifugal mood he thought that he must go to his apartment and pack his things for his return to Georgia.

He considered how he might courteously take his leave of the French girl. He had nothing more to say to her, nothing more to expect from her. She had withdrawn from him to the great distance of race and sex. They had not an idea, not a pulse beat in common.

He looked at her from the door of the bathroom, a strange woman asleep on a bed. A certain Southern consideration made him chary of waking a woman whom he did not know. As she slept she had the quiet Madonna look which had bewitched him in the laboratory, but now he perceived only mentally that she was luxurious, as one sees that a horse or a dog is handsome.

He debated whether he should awaken her and bid her good-by, or leave a note explaining his haste, or just go.

As he stood, still undecided, she stirred, sighed and began murmuring something. He thought she was waking and said to her in a low tone, in order to lay the foundation of his departure:

"Marie, I didn't tell you that I'll have to start back to Georgia tomorrow. . . ."

The woman lay with closed eyes, still sighing from some subtle wound of her giving. She murmured some words—". . . peace . . . Agnes . . . autumn . . ."—a string of disconnected words—and sighed again.

She was not awake. Mr Barnett was drawing breath to lift his undertone a trifle when she began again groaning and saying: ". . . lilacs . . . carmine . . . a day on Lake St George . . . the tread of mighty armies filling earth and sky . . ."

As Mr Barnett listened to this babble, the inkling of a

possible coherence dawned in his mind. He drew near her on tiptoe, looking intently at her. He wondered if it was possible, if such a miraculous thing were happening that the sleeping French girl was repeating the associative words from one of Dr Fyke's index cards.

It was, of course, a superstitious idea, because Dr Fyke's index cards were to quiet precisely such speculations as this. Nevertheless he leaned over her and asked in a taut whisper:

"Marie . . . Miss Redeau . . . Marie . . ."

There was no answer. Then he hazarded:

"Marie—is this for Dr Fyke?"

The French girl groaned and murmured:

"*Oui* . . . yes . . . for Dr Fyke."

"Are—are you giving a list—from one of the cards?"

"*Oui* . . . a list."

"Shall I— What do you want me to do—write it down?"

"Write it down."

He began a swift hunt through the apartment for pen and paper. She lay silent as he searched. Thoughts, rather ghostly thoughts, flickered through his head in the small, newly finished Queen Anne's cottage. . . . The incongruity of such a place for the return of a spirit . . . or perhaps this was a final deception of the medium . . . or the coincidence that Dr Fyke was lecturing at this very moment while the soul of some person listed in his cards . . . none of it was rational. He found the things in a period writing desk and returned to the bed.

"You want me to take all that down?" he asked, in a voice balanced between wonder, awe and skepticism.

"Yes, yes, please, the list. . . . Lilacs . . . carmine . . . a day on Lake St George . . . the tread of mighty . . ."

Mr Barnett wrote on, wondering, with an eerie feeling, if he really were transcribing the earthly associations of a disembodied soul. The very phrase denied the possibility

of its verity . . . a disembodied soul . . . How could there be a dis . . . Nevertheless he wrote on, with a pulse in his neck.

Yet it was an apt moment for such a message, just when Dr Fyke was addressing the crowd in Civic Center; just when thousands of people were intent on hearing what a man of thought and science had to say, then, for such a confirmation to appear. It looked as if the unknown at last had pity on the known. The implication of such a revelation filled Mr Barnett with a kind of awed excitement. Pointing to a final freedom, it would set men free. No power could regiment immortal souls. These words that he was hurrying down on paper, this list he wrote, was the Magna Charta of a slavish world.

Presently the list must have been completed; the girl ceased speaking, and a little later she awoke of herself. Mr Barnett bent over her with the paper in his hand.

"Marie! Marie!" he asked excitedly. "Do you know what you have been saying? Listen, you didn't plan this, you didn't deliberately plan such a—"

The girl blinked her eyes and sat up.

"Plan—plan what?"

"You called over a list to me—you made out a list and said it was one of Dr Fyke's lists."

"One of Dr Fyke's lists?"

"Yes, yes, one of the association tests that thousands of people have been making for months. I think it is one of them."

"I did! Why, that ees what Dr Fyke has been wanting. Let me see it!"

"Well, I don't know about him wanting it. I doubt very much if he wants it."

"André, why do you say that?"

"It was Schmalkin's idyah. Schmalkin said the whole historic moment was toward a mechanical—you know—a materialistic interpretation, and that by some twist nothing else would succeed."

The French girl sat up and looked at the list.

"Did you ever see it before?"

"No, I have not seen any of them—nobody but the persons who wrote them have ever. Mr Schmalkin had a wise head even if it was mixed at times. Maybe thees ees not one of Dr Fyke's leests?"

"Yes, but I think it is—it fits so perfectly."

"Fits how? How do you mean, André?"

"Why, his lecture—right now, at the Civic Center, not six blocks from here. He's talking to a big crowd, a regular jam!"

"He is?"

"And this will fit right in with what he's talking about. It will furnish exactly the proof——"

"Oh no, André, I do not theenk so."

"Why, it's bound to—that is, if it is one of his lists."

"No, even eef eet ees, he weel say eet ees notheeng. I do these theengs every week for Dr Fyke, and always he says they are notheeng."

"Then let's make him say it," cried Mr Barnett, shaking his list. "He got up this idyah himself, these lists, to prove there were no such things as souls. Now if this has —has backfired—and proves there are such things——Let's take it to him and see what he's got to say!"

The two made themselves ready, arranging their clothes and putting on their hats. Mr Barnett hastily scribbled a jurat at the bottom of his paper and signed it. It was his Southern idea to cast his testimony as nearly as he could in legal form.

They hurried out into the Circle, passed through the antique entrance and turned down the main street. The evening was still fairly young, and the lecture would not be over. They hurried along, gradually becoming more curious and excited about this thing that had happened to them. Mr Barnett began trying to explain to the French girl what he thought this proof might mean: ". . . It would stop the importance of what we finish on earth. . . .

That is why democracy has ceased to work, Marie—we no longer have time to finish a man. . . . The world knows so much and one man can know so little . . . We no longer try to make men, we make cogs to a great machine. . . . It's so much easier to make cogs . . . one little part . . . Our universities turn out thousands and thousands of parts . . . but if they only realized that they had an eternity to build in . . .”

The girl waggled a hand.

“Even eef thees ees a copy of one of hees cards, Dr Fyke somehow he weel explain eet away, and eet weel be noth-eeng.”

By this time the two evangelists with the burden of proof in their hands had reached the outskirts of the crowd that was still congested around Civic Center. A policeman met them three blocks from the auditorium.

“You two can't get through here,” he warned above the rumor of the crowd. “Ye'll have to go around—go north about four blocks, turn east——”

“We want to get into the lecture hall!”

“Ho!” The policeman broke out laughing. “Listen to the man! Why, the hall was filled up two hours before the lecture was billed to——”

“But listen,” pressed Mr Barnett desperately, “I have here something Dr Fyke must use in his lecture. . . . This girl, she works in his laboratory . . . It's the very thing he's lecturing about.”

The officer became interested.

“Listen, ye arre not makin' up a cock-an'-bull shtory, for if ye arre, me young buckaroo——”

“No, no, it's the truth, and—she thinks something will stop us, but don't you be the man——”

“Something will stop ye?”

“Oh, my God, don't let's go into that! Let us through —before the lecture's over!”

The officer was shaken.

"This sounds a bit crackpot to me, but—go ahead—go on. I don't believe ye'll ever git there, but go on and thry."

They set out together again, holding hands and hurrying one after the other through the thickening crowd. In a little while the people were saying:

"Don't push! You can't go any further . . . Don't push!"

"But listen, this is the medium Dr Fyke used in his laboratory! She's got new evidence—something Fyke wants—something ever'body wants."

At his excitement and earnestness the crowd wriggled about and let the two a little further into the jam, but at last several voices in front began calling back:

"Sh! Sh! Pipe down! Don't make so much racket! Listen to the loud-speakers!"

And sure enough, far down the street they could hear the loud-speakers booming in their hard, mechanical tones the message which the throng had pressed in to hear.

Even with the sound magnified, harsh and mechanized, Mr Barnett recognized the voice of Mr Eldo. The occasion, the situation seemed to remove Mr Barnett so completely out of Mr Eldo's world that he felt as if he knew Dr Fyke's workshop only by hearsay. He had to listen intently to understand Mr Eldo's words under their enormous magnification. The secretary spoke very slowly:

"It is with very great regret that we are forced to announce that Dr Fyke has suffered an accident at the Medical Memorial Hospital and will be unable to deliver the address this evening.

"However, I know that he would want me to state to this vast audience, in a few words, the truth, as nearly as his long technical research could determine it. Here are his words: 'It is not known whether there is or whether there is not an immortal part to man which survives his bodily death. There is no scientific proof either for or against such a belief. All that humanity possesses is belief, tradition, rationalization and analogy, and these prove noth-

ing.' Such, ladies and gentlemen, were Dr Myron Fyke's final words."

At this the throng around the two message bearers began to murmur and then to call and finally to shout:

"Then what are we to believe? Can't you tell us something we can believe?"

But of course there was no answer, because they were shouting through the darkness to great electrical mechanisms.

Then from the outskirts of the crowd came the small, indistinct pipings of newsboys: "Dr Fyke dead! Killed by crank . . ." At their cries a quiet spread and widened over the throng, as if what the boys were saying had shocked them into silence.

Four-column headlines, next to the pink Five Star Final's baseball scores of the afternoon, announced:

DR FYKE DEAD!

SHOT BY CRANK DURING MIND TESTS
AT MEDICAL MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

WAS DUE TO LECTURE ON
LIFE OF SOUL AFTER DEATH

Mr Barnett stood holding to Miss Redeau and clutching the sheet in his hand. Suddenly he suspected who had dictated the words on his list! Suddenly he knew who had done it!

And the thought swept over him that he must tell these silent people . . . they must know . . . they must understand the miraculous, the revolutionary message which he held in his cold fingers. . . .

But . . . where would he begin? Whom could he tell? What proof had he to set up? . . . A few disconnected words scribbled on a piece of paper. What authority would they possess, coming from a discredited university instructor . . . and a magdalen?

THE END

